00021276

BOMBAY BRANCH
OF THE
ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY
TOWN HALL, BOMBAY.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 26 March, 2016

JACQUES COEUR.

COPIED FROM THE ORIGINAL IN THE MAIRIE
AT BOURGES

JACQUES CŒUR,

THE FRENCH ARGONAUT,

AND

HIS TIMES.

B2676

BY

LOUISA STUART COSTELLO,

AUTHOR OF "MEMOIRS OF EMINENT ENGLISHWOMEN," "THE ROSE-GARDEN OF PERSIA," ETC.

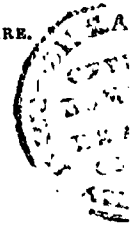
yy. 9 -18

I am sick of this false world; and will love nought
But even the mere necessities upon it.
Then, Timon, presently prepare thy grave:
Lie where the light foam of the sea may beat
Thy gravestone daily: make thine epitaph,
That death in me at other's lives may laugh.

What viler thing upon the earth, than friends
Who can bring noblest minds to basest ends!

SHAKSPEARE.

21276



LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

Publisher in Ordinary to Her Majesty.

M.DCCC.XLVII.

923.244
Coe/cos/Jac
~~24276~~.
21276.

00021276

LONDON:
Printed by S. & J. Bentley, Wilson, and Fley,
Bangor House, Shoe Lane.

PREFACE.

SOME explanation may perhaps be considered necessary relative to the Illustrations which accompany this volume.

The Portrait of Jacques Cœur was seen by the Author at Bourges during her visit to that remarkable town, a few years since. It exists in a small chamber used for legal purposes in the Mairie, which is no other than the mansion of the celebrated merchant. The Author made a sketch of the picture at the time, having been much struck with its character, and has since completed it from lithographic drawings copied from the original.

There exists another portrait of Jacques Cœur, of which an engraving is given in Denis Godefroid's "Life of Charles the Seventh." It has a different head-dress, but the features and expression are identical. In that he appears in a

small close cap, furred at the edge, instead of the remarkable turban he is generally represented as wearing, and which, although apparently Oriental, is merely the costume of the period, worn always by persons of distinction. There is, in an illuminated manuscript in the British Museum, a portrait of the Duke of Burgundy similarly arrayed; and it never happens that the Argentier, in the sculptures which adorn his house, is otherwise dressed.

In a work which appeared in numbers in 1834, called "Notices Pittoresques sur les Antiquités et les Monumens du Berri," published at Bourges by M. Hazé, may be found a variety of extremely interesting details respecting the house of Jacques Cœur, together with an extensive collection of lithographic sketches, representing almost every part of this singular building with exceeding correctness. From this work those few Woodcuts are taken which appear in this volume; and, as the Author is well acquainted with the locality, she can answer for their fidelity. It was her original intention that many more should have been appended to this Memoir, as she conceived they possessed unusual interest, and would have rendered her description more comprehensive.

The Vessel represented at the end of the Preliminary Remarks is part of a piece of sculpture in high relief, which formerly existed in what was called the *Salle des Galères*. It was placed over one of the doors, and is now a mere fragment, thrown aside, with other precious bits, in a dark chamber seldom looked into. It is on a single stone about three feet high, and represents an antique two-masted vessel, bearing a banner with fleurs-de-lis on one, and on the other a sort of balcony, in which are placed three men armed at all points; but of these figures the heads are wanting. One of the men seems occupied in hurling down stones from a sack; above these one leg of a soldier can still be discerned, who appeared to be employed still higher up the mast.

Several soldiers wearing helmets and cuirasses are busy rowing: the oars are broken away; but their attitudes tell the tale sufficiently.

Nothing is wanting in this sculpture: there are the cordages, the iron-work of the vessel, the holes for the oars, and a variety of details indicating different parts of the construction. Beneath, as it were in the sea, divers marine plants, and the head of a seal, or some such animal, are

figured. The delicacy and minuteness of the work is remarkable, and the artist has been scrupulous in neglecting no part of his subject.

It was originally painted and gilded, as may still be seen in some parts: the ground was blue, the sea green, and the fleurs-de-lis were gilded.

Another of the Woodcuts which appear at the head of some of these Chapters represents a portion of the stone gallery which formerly ran along great part of the walls, and of which some remains are still to be seen. That part which is most conspicuous is about three feet high, and is composed of large stones worked very elaborately in medallions, having in its pattern hearts and shells, and a long scroll drawn out through the foliaged wreath, on which the device of the Argentier appears: "A VAILLANS CŒURS RIEN IMPOSSIBLE."

The stone tablet over the chief entrance, representing three Oriental trees, with flowers beneath them, and the motto "DIRE: FAIRE: TAIRE: DE MA JOIE," is shewn in another.

One is a copy of two of the compartments of stone sculpture which adorn the principal entrance-tower, and represents Jacques Cœur and his lady, Macée de Léodepart, in habits of cere-

mony; the former holding a flower, and bearing a trowel.

The curious lock of the private study of the merchant is also copied; and the remarkable sculpture, which is described at length in this work as having ornamented Jacques Cœur's secret chamber, appears amongst the text.

A drawing is given of the only remaining squares of painted glass still to be seen, in which the jester with a padlock on his mouth, and the motto "*En bouche close n'entre mouche,*" is seen.

The exterior of the house next the street is also given, and one side of the interior court; but, on so very small a scale, little idea can be conveyed of the beauty of the original structure.

In giving the details of the house of Jacques Cœur, there is so much to describe, that a whole volume might be occupied if full justice were done to the interesting subject, and the illustrations which could be introduced would occupy a very considerable space. As the work of M. Hazé, of which mention has been made, is entirely devoted to the subject of the curiosities of Bourges, numerous interesting descriptions are given in it: amongst others, he names one of the

remarkable chimney-pieces which formerly adorned one of the chief salles of the mansion of the Argentier. As the others are sculptured with chivalrous subjects, so this, executed with equal care, is a caricature of the habits and manners of the great of the period.

Singularly enough, the whole of it is an evident satire on the tournaments and knightly occupations of the day, everything being turned into ridicule, and represented in the most grotesque manner. There is still enough of the ruin left to enable the curious to trace the history detailed; but M. Hazé's drawing supplies what is wanting in the original as it now exists.

Instead of knights and their chargers, peasants are represented mounted on asses, tilting against each other with sticks for lances: their shields are made of basket-work, and their stirrups of rope. Some wear a grotesque imitation of a helmet and visor, and they have cock's feathers instead of flowing plumes. The valets and squires are in peasants' costume, and bear cows' horns, which do duty for warlike trumpets; and in place of lances they carry a bundle of sticks, ready to supply their master in the tourney.

There is something peculiarly comic in the

pompous character given to these groups, and the whole work is farcical in the extreme. A caricature in stone is a somewhat heavy prototype of the "Punch" of our days; but no doubt it afforded as much mirth to the lovers of fun in the fifteenth century, as that witty and caustic gentleman's productions do in the nineteenth.

It is by no means unusual to see comic representations of serious things in very early manuscripts; often the illuminated borders of missals exhibit, amidst fruit and flowers, absurd figures of asses, foxes, and other animals, grotesquely attired as friars and monks; these were intended to ridicule different orders in the Church; and the satire was sometimes directed against heretics and schismatics; but this ponderous mode of laughing at one's neighbour is, I should conceive, unique in its kind.

As Jacques Cœur was a man of the people, he might not be sorry occasionally to show contempt for the privileged classes, from whom, no doubt, as is always the case with regard to persons who have gained a position in which they were not born, he frequently received checks and insolences mortifying to his pride. It is probable that sports like these were usual with the lower

orders, amongst whom there is seldom any want of wit, ever ready to be launched against the arrogance of those above them, and generally pointed at the reigning customs of the aristocracy.

LONDON, March 26, 1847.

CONTENTS.

PAGE

INTRODUCTION. 1

PRELIMINARY REMARKS. — Charles VII. and his Argentier. 5

CHAPTER I.

Isabeau de Bavière.—Duke Frederic.—The Duchess of Brabant.—The Pilgrimage.—Vanity encouraged.—Extravagant Costume.—Wigs.—Expense.—Rich Furs.—Robes. 15

CHAPTER II.

The Carmelite.—The Hennin.—The discomfited Ladies.—The Triumph of Brother Thomas.—Popularity.—The Sequel.—The Close.—William de l'Ollive. . 24

CHAPTER III.

The Bride.—Froissart's Account of the Entry into Paris of Isabeau de Bavière.—Devices.—Progress of the Procession.—The King en croupe.—The masked Ball.—Factions.—Valentina. 33

CHAPTER IV.

Destitution of the King.—Simonet Caboche.—J'envie: Je tiens.—Reconciliation.—The Messenger.—The Assassination.—Escape of the Assassins.—Consternation.—Suspicion.—The knotted Club planed. . . . 43

CHAPTER V.

PAGE

The Widow.—Sorcery.—Accusations.—The Appeal.—Royal Family leave Paris.—The Armagnacs.—Azincourt.—Justice soudaine.—Maniac Leader.—Henry of England.—Montereau.—Assassination of Jean sans Peur.—Treaty of Troyes.—Death of Isabeau. 54

CHAPTER VI.

Charles le Bien Instruit.—Le Roi de Bourges.—Character of the King.—Labourer's Song.—Golden Age.—The King's Position.—His Favourites.—His Hopelessness. . 68

CHAPTER VII.

Poets.—Alain Chartier.—Marguerite d'Ecosse. . 77

CHAPTER VIII.

Bourges Cathedral.—The Romans.—Louis XI.—Arms of Bourges.—The Holy Ass. 85

CHAPTER IX.

Jacques Cœur's Father.—Nicolas Flamel.—Paul Lucas.—The Book.—The Red Stone.—Ferrand de Cordube.—His Disappearance.—Magic Stone.—Supernatural Wealth. 94

CHAPTER X.

Damascus.—Blades.—Greek Fire.—Moorish Secrecy.—Trade with the East.—Low Esteem of Traders.—House of Jacques Cœur. 103

CHAPTER XI.

House of Jacques Cœur described.—Chapel.—Secret Chambers.—Mystery.—Vaults.—Roofs.—Furniture of the Period. 112

CHAPTER XII.

PAGE

Furniture of the Period.—House at Montpellier.—The Lodge.—Bureau of the Treasury.—Royal Gratitude.—Necromancy. 134

CHAPTER XIII.

The Dining-hall. — Buffets.— The Table.— Lights.— Trancher la Nappe.—Banquets.—Artists in France.—Foucquet and Mellin. 141

CHAPTER XIV.

Jacques Cœur's Knowledge. — Lahire and Poton.— Poverty of the King.—Expenses.—Destitution of the Court. —Friendship of Jacques Cœur.—Marie d'Anjou. . 156

CHAPTER XV.

La Demoiselle de Fromenteau. — Louis XI. and the Monks. — Pragmatic Sanction. — Mehun-sur-Yèvre. — Castles of Agnes.—Art in the Fifteenth Century.—Loches. 167

Antoinette de Maignelais. 187

CHAPTER XVI.

Golden Crowns.—Letters of Nobility.—Knights of St. John.—Assembly of Three Estates.—Genoa.—Rome.—Amadeo. 198

CHAPTER XVII.

History of the Poet Prince, Charles of Orleans: his Captivity: his Works.—Ballad. . . . 213

CHAPTER XVIII.

Continuation of the History of Charles of Orleans. . 226

CHAPTER XIX.

PAGE
Literature of the Age.—Poets. 242

CHAPTER XX.

State of the Army.—Ecorcheurs.—Conquest of Normandy.—Antoine de Chabannes.—The Dauphin.—Dunois.—Ready Aid.—Infringement of the Truce.—Rouen Surrendered.—Triumphal Entry. 259

CHAPTER XXI.

Ways and Means.—Chivalry.—The Fair Pilgrim.—The Knight of Beau Jardin. 280

CHAPTER XXII.

Harfleur.—Reverses.—Death of Agnes Sorel.—Accusation.—Jacques Cœur's Family.—Ingratitude.—The Seneschal.—Charlotte de France.—Marriette. . . . 289

CHAPTER XXIII.

Height of Wealth.—St. Fargeau.—Xaincoins.—Dauphin.—The King's Faith shaken.—Otto Castellani.—De Chabannes. 303

CHAPTER XXIV.

Loans to the Dauphin.—Mission to Lausanne.—Jacques Cœur's Magnificence.—Arrest.—Jeanne de Vendôme.—A Dungeon.—The Judgment. 312

CHAPTER XXV.

Judges.—Debtors.—Charges.—Tortures. . . 326

CHAPTER XXVI.

The Soldan's Letter.—Strange Animal.—Early Travellers.—Bawme.—Spikenard. 336

CHAPTER XXVII.

PAGE

French Name.—La Brocquière.—Bad Odours.—Joan of Arc.—Jean de Luxembourg.—Laon. 354

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Death of Macée de Léodepart.—Jean Cœur's Protest.—Condemnation.—Amende Honorable.—The Lady of Montagne.—Rapid Appropriation.—Claim of the Church rejected.—Division of Spoil.—Estates. 362

CHAPTER XXIX.

Jean de Village.—Honesty.—Beaucaire.—The Letter.—The Brother.—The Tablets.—The Factors.—The Boat.—Escape.—The Pope.—Sickness.—Death of Pope Nicolas.—His Successor.—Settlement of Affairs. . . . 376

CHAPTER XXX.

Siege of Constantinople.—Loss.—The Appeal to Christendom.—Letter.—The Vow. 386

CHAPTER XXXI.

The Banquet.—Check.—The Captain General.—Scio.—Various Accounts.—Romance.—Letter to the King.—Restitution. 399

CHAPTER XXXII.

Chabannes.—Peace and Policy.—Jacques Cœur's Factors. 417

APPENDIX 423

INTRODUCTION.

It is a fact which cannot fail to awaken interest as well as surprise, that the great efforts which are at present being made on the continent of Europe, to secure a direct communication with the East, are but a repetition of the endeavours which constantly occupied the attention of the politic merchants of the Middle Ages. The struggle between France, Italy, and Germany, to establish through their respective countries the overland route to India, is in reality of old date. Marseilles was the rival of Venice and Genoa on the one hand, and of the great Hanseatic League on the other.

The *point de mire* then, as now, was Alexandria.

The Venetians and Genoese strove earnestly to render their respective ports the avenues through which the produce of the East should diffuse itself over western Europe; while the great commercial cities of Germany exerted themselves to make Nuremberg the grand en-

trepôt for Oriental commerce, in opposition to Lyons and other inland cities of France.

The maritime advantages of the Italian ports were great, and at a very early period were fully appreciated. The Crusades also, which drained the rest of Europe of its wealth, were highly serviceable to them, for it was in their harbours that the great armies bound for the Holy Land generally assembled, and from thence were dispatched to Egypt and Syria the immense supplies which were necessary for their support. Commerce went hand in hand with these warlike enterprises, or rather extended itself to the carrying nations as a necessary consequence; and, at the commencement of the fifteenth century, the republics of Genoa and Venice were, with Florence, become a maritime city by the reduction of Pisa and the acquisition of Leghorn, the monopolists of the trade with the East.

Up to this period the commercial views of France had been limited in their object and restricted in their course. In point of antiquity, Marseilles might claim precedence over all the cities situated on the Mediterranean, and from the period of its foundation by a Phocean colony to the time of Charlemagne, it continued, though with various fortune, to be one of the principal ports of southern Europe. Other places in France, in the interior as well

as on the coast of Languedoc, derived advantages also from the trade with the Levant; and had a continuous policy, which was permitted to the Italian republics, been possible, the commerce of France might still have made head against its formidable rivals, nor have suffered that declension which fell upon it during the Middle Ages. Though the country was of vast extent, throughout which the two varieties of the French tongue, the languages of *oc* and *oil*, were spoken, and though these eventually were fused, and it owned one nominal head, it was in reality divided into numerous states, clogged by conflicting interests and harassed by perpetual warfare with enemies at home as well as abroad. It is true, that, by the exertions of St. Louis, a code was drawn up which served as the basis for the future commercial statutes of France, but in the disastrous wars with England in the fourteenth century, there was neither inclination nor opportunity on the part of her monarchs to turn the provisions of the pious Crusader's foresight to account. When Charles V.,—the Wise, as he was rightly named,—came to the throne, he issued many salutary ordinances in favour of commerce. During his reign the French navy became more respectable than it had been since the time of Charlemagne; by his vigilant care the navigation of the kingdom was released from its tributary position towards

foreigners, who had always possessed the power of hiring or selling their vessels, either for commercial freights or military expeditions. But the terrible misfortunes which befel the country during the long anarchy which goes by the name of the reign of Charles VI., extinguished all the hopes that were entertained in France from the wise regulations of his predecessor, and her commerce fell into a state of the deepest neglect.

It is always reserved for a master-spirit to bring about a great good, the want of which has long been felt, and it was still in the midst of the troubles which agitated his unhappy land, that a simple individual arose, who by industry, perseverance, and devotion to the cause he had adopted, succeeded in placing the commerce of France on an equal footing with that of any other nation.

This personage was Jacques Cœur, at first a merchant of Bourges, and afterwards chief adviser and governor of the finances of Charles VII. of France.

D. C.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

CHARLES THE SEVENTH AND HIS ARGENTIER.

After the death of Charles the Wise, king of France, during whose judicious and prudent reign the country had in some measure revived and begun to recover from the disasters that followed the battle of Poictiers, a long minority ensued, and faction, ambition, and disorder had too ample a field for growth. Charles VI. was but twelve years of age when his father died, and, left to the guardianship of his three uncles, he had no power but theirs: he was kept as much as possible in a state of ignorance, his passions encouraged, and his violence unrestrained.

With generous impulses and good sense, had this unfortunate prince been of more mature age when he came to the crown, had he been allowed the advantage of his wise father's instructions, he would no doubt have made an excellent ruler, and even the fatal disorder under which he laboured might probably have been subdued. But the interest of those about him was to keep him every way in subjection,

and he became a victim, as well as the devoted country which called him king.

As an instance of the noble feelings which were fostered by his father, and might have developed themselves hereafter, had he not been too early left to less judicious counsellors, the following anecdote, told by Jean Jouvenal des Ursins, the chronicler, is remarkable:—

"One day the king, his father, made a great banquet and invited many guests; and after the table was cleared he ordered a very rich and fine crown to be brought, together with a basnet. These he shewed to his son Charles, and asked him which he preferred, whether to be crowned king with the crown, or to wear the basnet and be subject to the perils and fortunes of war? To which question the prince plainly replied, that he liked best the basnet, for that the crown should belong to him only if he was a good knight."

On several occasions he proved that he possessed courage, and that his heart went with his words.

When still a mere boy he married a young girl, just out of her infancy; beautiful, headstrong, and as inexperienced as himself, but without a spark of that goodness which occasionally shone forth from his obscured mind; and promised so much, that, with all his drawbacks, Charles was the idol of his people.

Isabeau de Bavière had nothing but her transcendent beauty to boast: her mind was a blank on which designing persons wrote every vice and crime, and as they were congenial to her nature, the impression remained fixed.

The ill-fated son of a wise king was persecuted by fortune to the utmost extremity of her severity: his wife was false and treacherous; his nearest relatives betrayed and ruined him; his nobles were perfidious; and a foreign foe was at his gates, encouraged by the incessant quarrels of those great lords, in whose hands lay the destinies of France.

Meantime the rest of his subjects were not behindhand in following the example of turbulence set them by the higher orders. Ceaseless and fierce quarrels took place between the clergy and the laity, between the monks and the University of Paris. The people took part with the opposite factions of Armagnacs and Burgundians, and tore each other to pieces in their fury; armies of robbers banded together and ravaged the country, desolating and destroying whatever they approached, and, glorying in their crimes, assumed the most horrible titles expressive of their atrocious deeds.

In the midst of all this, religious processions were made and feasts and revelry abounded; the poor died in the streets of plague; assassinations took place in every quarter of the cities; massa-

cres, tortures, outrages of every description prevailed; and in this general confusion the king went mad.

While this state of things was at the height, the early youth of Charles VII. was passed in the centre of anarchy and misrule: even in infancy he learnt to know the unhappy position of affairs, now seized upon by one party, now torn away by another; he was witness to constant contention and was made the hero of endless struggles. Deprived of the affection of his parents, one of whom was suffering under mental aberration and the other given over to intrigue and worldly pleasure, he was hunted from place to place, and obliged to seek shelter from native and foreign foes, uncertain who were his friends, and scarcely able to rely on one who professed to have his interest at heart.

Disinherited and proscribed, poor and desolate, the unfortunate prince, by the time he had reached the age of manhood, had felt almost all the ills that flesh is heir to, and had had more sad experience of the mutability of fortune than usually falls to the lot of so young a person, even in the lowest walks of life.

But notwithstanding these misfortunes, few sovereigns have had more staunch and resolutely faithful friends; and that he did not reward them when it was in his power to do so, according to their merits, is the blot upon his

character, which partial writers have in vain endeavoured to clear away, for the remark of a modern historian is unfortunately but too well deserved.

" Ainsi Charles Sept, que l'histoire a surnommé ' Le Victorieux' parceque Jeanne d'Arc lui prêta son epée et Jacques Cœur son argent, a laissé brûler la prémière sur la place de Rouen, et a sacrifié le second aux seigneurs de la cour."

It has been thought, with no little justice, that Charles's chief merit was in submitting to salutary advice, and in following the direction of superior minds, but he also allowed himself to be guided by others for evil as well as good, and thus permitted injustice to triumph, if he did not himself encourage misdeeds.

He occupies, says M. Thierry, a prominent place in history, not so much from his own acts as from what was done in his name.

His argentier and counsellor, Jacques Cœur, the subject of this memoir, was one of the most remarkable personages of his age, of which an historian, alluding to his wealth and mercantile speculations, has called him ' The Rothschild.' To him the monarch owed in a great measure his restoration to his rights; and to him France is indebted for the establishment of her commercial importance.

To M. Bonamy the literary world is the most indebted for a clear and correct account of the

great merchant Jacques Cœur, and it is that learned authority whom M. le Baron Trouvé has chiefly followed in the life he has written of the argentier.

M. Bonamy, in his "Mémoire de l'Academie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres," calls the attention of the French nation to a citizen distinguished for the love of his country and his king, and worthy of admiration for the great qualities of his mind and heart.

"Devoted to the public good, he never separated his private interests from those of the state. If he employed his wealth in making great acquisitions; if he profited by the favour of the king to obtain elevated positions for his family, it is no less true that the king found in him a zealous subject, always grateful and always ready to assist him in all his necessities."

It was he who established for Charles VII. the good order that reigned in his finances, who suppressed the abuses which had crept into the fabrication of money, and re-established that commerce, entirely lost to the kingdom during the desolating wars which existed between France and England.

In fine, it is principally to him that is due the glory of the reign of Charles VII., for, without attempting to lower the reputation of the heroes whose valour did so much, it must be allowed that they could never have shone so brightly if

Jacques Cœur had not by his care procured for the army the necessary funds, as well as artillery and supplies, without which these efforts would have been paralysed.

Nevertheless, the name of Jacques Cœur has not descended to posterity surrounded with the splendour which waits on those of Dunois, Lahire, Santrailles, De Chabannes, and others who fought the battles of their king, for the nature of the services of the argentier were of a less apparent nature, and less calculated to dazzle the world.

The title of argentier, by which he is always designated, is significant of a personage to whom all the royal treasurers were bound every year to transmit a certain sum of money to supply the revenues of the King, and to be employed in the expenses of his household. The argentier in his turn was bound to render a report of sums so collected to the chamber of accounts.

He was called also counsellor of the king; and it is evident that on all important matters he was consulted by Charles, who ceased not to employ him in his service as long as he continued in favour. Those who read the history of his services, and are acquainted with the obligations which he conferred on his country and his king, cannot fail to be astonished at the injustice and ingratitude which ruined his fortunes, disgraced his name, and drove him forth to exile and to death.

"His wealth," says La Thaumassière, "was his chief crime, and caused the vultures of the court to stoop upon him, greedy as they were of his possessions, and resolved to partake in the spoils of his gigantic fortune."

His fortune was, indeed, shared by all whom he had ever obliged; and the triumph of his enemies was complete, although not a single accusation brought against him was proved at the time of his sentence, and all was acknowledged to be false afterwards.

Even at the moment of his iniquitous trial, however, the first charge, no less than that of murder, brought against him was abandoned, and his accuser was punished, only to leave the field open to charges more artfully managed, and more powerfully supported.

The advocates of parliament, when his sentence was revoked, expressed their opinion that, the trial exhibited "nullity, injustice, manifest iniquity, and error express."

In the letters granted by Louis XI. to the sons of Jacques Cœur, he states that "he was made prisoner at the instance of several of his enemies and ill-wishers, desirous of despoiling him, and of enriching themselves."

It is to be regretted that the minute details of his life are unknown, and that the blanks in his history must be filled up by conjecture. It would, indeed, be interesting to follow his steps

in the East, and to know all his adventures by sea and land, at home and abroad.

He has left a curious memorial of himself at his native town of Bourges en Berry, in the magnificent house he erected there: and his name, surrounded as it is with mystery, occurs in all the chronicles of his time, coupled with that of his master, Charles of France, le Bien Servi.

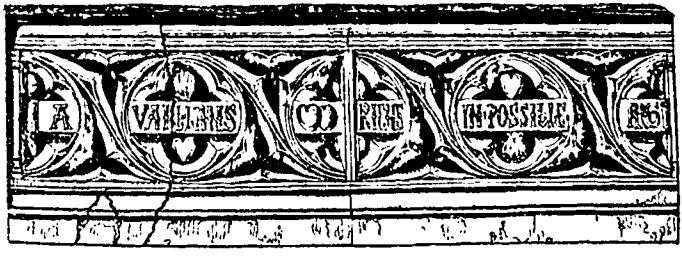
The chronicler, Mathieu de Coussy, in his quaint language thus introduces the celebrated merchant to his readers.

"King Charles had in his kingdom a man of small lineage, who was called Jacques Cœur, the which, by his sense, boldness, and good conduct, so managed, that he undertook divers great mercantile works, and was made argentier of King Charles, in which office he remained a long space of time, in prosperity and honour.

"He had many clerks and factors under him, who disposed of his merchandise in all lands and countries belonging to Christians, and even in the realm of the Sarasins. He had on the seas several large vessels which went into Barbary, and as far as Babylon, carrying on trade by the license of the Soldan and the infidel Turks; also, by paying them tribute, he brought from those countries cloths of gold, and silk of all fashions, and of all colours; also furs suitable both for men and women, of divers sorts, such as martins, *genettes*, and other strange things, which could

never before be got for gold or silver in any markets besides.

"He caused to be sold by his factors, both at the hotel of the king, and in many places in the said kingdom of France, every sort of merchandise for wear that man can think of or imagine; at which many persons, as well nobles as merchants and others, were much amazed. He gained alone, every year, more than all the other merchants in the kingdom put together."



MEMOIR

OF

JACQUES CŒUR.

CHAPTER I.

ISABEAU DE BAVIERE.—DUKE FREDERIC.—THE DUCHESS OF BRABANT.—THE PILGRIMAGE.—VANITY ENCOURAGED.—EXTRAVAGANT COSTUME.—WIGS.—EXPENSE.—RICH FURS.—ROBES.

In order to enter fully into the state of France at this period, it is necessary to pass in review the life of that too famous Queen and unnatural mother, Isabeau de Bavière, wife of Charles VI., whose enmity to her son was one of the chief causes of his early misfortunes.

Isabeau de Bavière, the "fair and fatal enemy" of Charles VI. and of France, was the daughter of Stephen II., called the Young, Duke of Bavaria, and of Thadea Visconti of Milan, daughter

of Barnabo Visconti. Charles the Wise, anxious to fortify himself against the power of England by a German alliance, left directions at his death that a bride should be sought for his son amongst the most considerable of the houses of the empire.

The high reputation of the family of Bavaria, and the great beauty of young Isabeau, made it appear that no more judicious alliance could be found than the one chosen for the youthful king. The uncle of Isabeau, Frederic of Bavaria, was a firm friend of France; and when he visited Charles VI. and his guardian uncles, it was intimated to him that nothing could be more pleasing to the country than the circumstance of a relative of his becoming the Queen of France. Frederic had no daughter, but flattered and delighted with the prospect of the aggrandisement of his family, he named at once the fact of his brother Stephen being possessed of a treasure, so peerless, that she seemed formed by nature to fill the exalted station offered her. He represented Isabeau, then between thirteen and fourteen years of age, as a miracle of beauty, and was far from disguising the satisfaction that would be felt by his brother if the match could be brought about.

Nothing was, however, at this time communicated to the young king on the subject, which was dropped, as his uncles were yet undecided on

whom to fix. A question was even started relative to a princess of Lorraine; and the daughter of the Duke of Lancaster was also proposed.

Meanwhile, Frederic had returned to Bavaria, full of the possibility of his niece's advancement, and related to his brother the conferences he had had with the uncles of the king respecting his future wife. The whole family was enraptured at the prospect, and set about plans to bring it to a happy result.

Stephen considered that the best way would be to send his daughter to France; but the danger was of the scheme not answering, and some dishonour and mortification ensuing, without great care and prudence.

At this juncture Marguerite de Flandres, Duchess of Brabant, stepped forward in aid of this matrimonial plot; and, having taken her measures, sent an invitation to Duke Frederic and his young niece, recommending them to join her at Amiens, where the King and his council then were, together with the two brides and bridegrooms of Bavaria and Burgundy, whose double alliances had just been concluded at Cambrai.

On the pretext of performing a pilgrimage to St. Jean d'Amiens, Isabeau and her uncle arrived at that town, where all had been prepared for her reception. Charles VI. was then between sixteen and seventeen years of age, and of an enthusiastic and excitable disposition; he

had been greatly moved by the description given him of the beauty of the Bavarian princess, and at last his impatience to behold her rose to such a height that he never ceased, when he heard of her intended visit to Amiens, enquiring when the opportunity would be afforded him of seeing so lovely a creature.

Too soon for his peace they met; but previously the fair sorceress had been instructed in the part she was to play, and every means that could be devised was resorted to to render the effect of her charms irresistible. She was clothed in the most becoming and sumptuous apparel, and tutored to use every art to attract the volatile and uncertain lover for whom she was destined.

Delighted at the novelty of her situation, her young heart opened at once to the vanity and ambition set before her as the chief good of existence, and from the moment when she saw herself in the brilliant costume in which her friends had decked her person, that inordinate love of dress and splendour, so fatally conspicuous in her after life, took deep root, and was never afterwards eradicated.

The Duchess of Brabant, "a prudent and wise princess," as Froissart calls her, was shocked when she first beheld the simple habit in which the pretty child Isabeau appeared before her, and without loss of time caused her to be de-

corated in a manner suitable to the high fortune which awaited her. When one considers the cumbrous dress of the day, it is difficult to conceive that the young beauty of fourteen could be much embellished by it, particularly if the Bavarian costume, sufficiently ungraceful at the present day, was equally so then, which is probable. In the time of Brantôme, the fashions of the time of Charles VI. were considered, in comparison with those in vogue in the sixteenth century, as "*drôleries, bifferies, et grossières.*"

The ladies of this early period are reproached by the preachers of the time for wearing robes of immoderate length, which swept the ground as they walked for several yards. These robes were lined with rich furs, and confined at the waist by broad silken sashes, to which hung rosaries of gold and precious jewels, of which their necklaces were also composed, and were of remarkable magnificence. The fashionable head-dress was either a huge sort of turban, coming forward on the temples, and divided into two horns covered with jewels, which could not, however, disguise the ugliness of its form; or the high-peaked cap was adopted, of which those still worn in Normandy convey a correct idea, the difference, however, being, that from the extremity of the peak, generally three quarters of an ell high, depended a veil which reached to the

ground. If this veil were made of light materials, it might be worn without inconvenience; but when, as frequently appears in the pictures of the time, the material of which it was formed was heavy, the fatigue of supporting such a weight on the head may be conceived.

False hair was much in favour at this period, as it continued to be, more or less, for several centuries both in France and England. Red and yellow hair appèars to have been chiefly held in esteem, as the poets, a race ever ready to catch at the ridiculous, have recorded in verses of the time.

A Paris, un tas de béjaunes,
Lavent, trois fois le jour, leur têtes
Afin qu'ils aient les cheveux jaunes.

Hector se promene au soleil
Pour faire sécher sa perruque.

The men wore wigs of horse-hair dyed flaxen:

De la queue d'un cheval peinte
Quant leur cheveux sont trop petits,
Ils ont une perruque feinte.

Ladies wore wigs of various colours, and painted their faces in an extravagant manner. But whatever might have been the luxury of dress indulged in by Isabeau de Bavière, the reproaches cast upon her for the enormity of possessing *two chemises of linen*, instead of those generally worn, of serge, appear at the present day not a little extraordinary.

Certainly the expense entered into by the ladies at this period must have been very great, and they were not content with merely providing themselves with one costly habiliment at a time, for they ordered a series of dresses at once, of a price startling even at the present day; nor do their lords appear to have been behindhand in this respect. Chroniclers have divulged the fact of charges for dress, which seem well to warrant the anger of the reforming clergy of the time; for instance, an account occurs of Jehan de Saumur for shoes for the king, Charles VI., as follows:—

"For thirty-two pairs of shoes *à poulains*, and fifty pairs of shoes, white, black, red, and *feustrés*."

The Duchess of Orleans' bill for shoes enumerates those lined and trimmed with fur of *gris rouge*, and boots of delicate colours, lined with rich furs, a *relever de nuit;* by which it appears that the ladies of that age understood comfort and luxury extremely well. She has also "*souliers noirs et escorchiés*," ornamented and open-worked slippers, no doubt of exquisite workmanship, and worthy of a Paris workman of the present day.

The passion for furs, which appeared to be extremely expensive, was carried to a great extent, as was that of goldsmiths' work: the king's expenses, in 1404, for the latter are computed at

four thousand five hundred livres; for fur he expended four thousand two hundred livres.

The robes worn by the great were of extraordinary richness, as the following account shows: To Symonet Monart, for the lining of a *houppelande* (long mantle), three hundred and twenty-eight Prussian sables. For another, six hundred and seventeen backs of *gris fin.* For the trimming of a robe for the Duke of Orleans, two thousand seven hundred and forty-six skins of *menu vair* (the bellies only). For the lining of a robe to rise in at night, two thousand seven hundred and forty-one backs of *gris fin.* For the entire trimming of a robe, thus described, "pour la cloche, pour le seurcot cloz, pour le seurcot ouvert, pour le chaperon," in all, one thousand seven hundred and sixty-two skins of *menu vair.*

Gloves were also an important and expensive article of attire: they were very carefully made, and must have been an ornamental part of the costume, as they are described as being fringed, embroidered, notched and variously ornamented; they were charged from six sous to sixteen sous a pair, equal to twice as many francs, or more, of the present date.

Combs, brooches, and mirrors of ivory are also spoken of as being very costly.

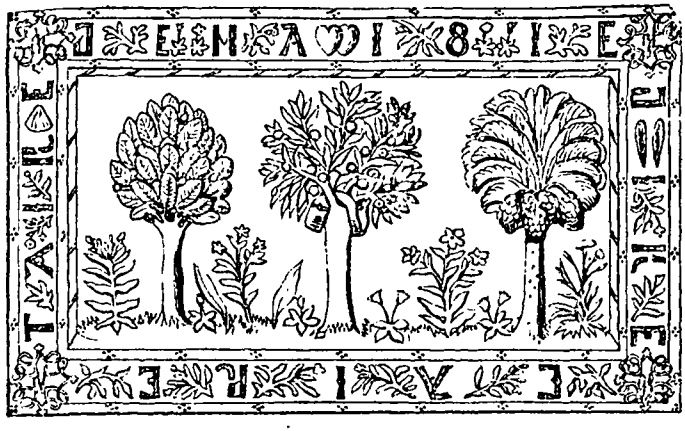
Charles VI. wore robes made of crimson velvet figured with gold, green, white, and black, gar-

nished with borders of *black London cloth;* and one gown is spoken of as bordered with *drap de Moustier—Viller moitié blanc moitié noir.* The sleeves were of immense size, and sometimes of different quality, as they are separately named, sometimes as being of *drap de soie de Lucques.*

There is, however, an instance of prudent economy in an entry relative to certain sleeves *exchanged* by the king for *pourpoints,* to a mercer. It was not uncommon for the nobles and even the king, to put their clothes in pawn when they wanted money, and the usurers were well content to furnish the gallants of the court with means for such considerations.

The expenses for embroidery in the different MS. accounts which exist, are heavy, and seem to indicate considerable skill, for instance in the charges for dress of Charles VI.

"A Robert de Varennes, brodeur et varlet de chambre du roy, pour les broderies par luy faictes sur la manche sinistre d'une houppelande bastarde, c'est assavoir sur icelle autour du bras un chapel de branche de may et de genestre, tout faict d'or de Chypre, cousu de soye, 8 liv."



CHAPTER II.

THE CARMELITE.—THE HENNIN.—THE DISCOMFITED LADIES.—THE TRIUMPH OF BROTHER THOMAS.—POPULARITY.—THE SEQUEL.—THE CLOSE.—WILLIAM DE L'OLLIVE.

MONSTRELET gives an account of a famous preacher whose denunciations were directed against the extravagant attire then in fashion, and the ladies were the chief objects of his indignation.

Brother Thomas Conecte, a Carmelite friar, was the hardy individual who ventured to direct attention to abuses of this kind, and who succeeded in gaining golden opinions, at least from the lower orders, whose "withers were unwrung" by his reproaches, and who rejoiced in hearing the rich and great vituperated. Brother Thomas came from Brittany, and by his predications acquired such popularity, that in every town where

he appeared he was welcomed with enthusiasm, at first by the nobles and townspeople, as well as those of lower estate, who caused scaffolds in the open places of the towns he passed through to be erected for him to preach from, and had them adorned with rich tapestry, to do him honour.

On this platform was erected an altar, at which he said mass, accompanied with others of his order, and his disciples, a concourse of whom followed him wherever he went, riding, as was his wont, on a small mule.

His sermons were very long, and directed against the sins of the age, and particularly against those of the clergy, which he described as many and great. He likewise, says the chronicler, *blâmoit et diffamoit très excellentement les femmes*, not sparing any of the highest rank.

The high head-dress, called *hennin*, he attacked especially, so that no female wearing those most in fashion dared appear before him; for he was accustomed when he saw any to excite against them all the little children of the quarter, and even went so far in his zeal as to accord them certain days of pardon, on condition that they followed the wearers of the obnoxious headgear, crying vehemently in derision, "Au hennin! au hennin!"

The pious votaries thus selected were not likely to disappoint the zealous preacher, but entered into his views with infinite alacrity, not

merely exclaiming and pointing at the conspicuous piece of vanity so distasteful to holy minds, but endeavouring to pull the same off the heads of the gentle and noble dames who were so incautious as to come within reach of their reproaches:—

"Tant qu'il convenait qu'icelles femmes se sauvassent et missent à sauveté en aucun lieu."

As might be expected, this amusing sort of piety was not received very quietly, and continual rencontres took place between the zealots and the attendants on their victims, which but little tended to preserve the public peace.

Nevertheless brother Thomas continued, and ceased not to inveigh against the vanities of immoderate apparel till he had entirely shamed the females of every class who indulged in it. Many ladies retired to their country houses in an apparently improved frame of mind, "ayant grand vergogne des honteuses et injurieuses paroles qu'elles avaient ouies au dit prêchement, se disposérent a mettre sus leur atours." The fair penitents adopted, instead of horns and peaks, low caps and hoods, "semblable que portoient femmes de béguinage."

But this humble mode lasted a very brief period, "and as," continues the chronicler, "after the example of the snail, when one passes by him he draws in his horns, so when he no longer fears any one he shoots them forth again. Thus acted

these dames; for, in brief, no sooner had the said preacher quitted the country than they recommenced as before, and forgetting his doctrine, went bit by bit back to their first estate, such as, or even more extravagant than, they had worn them before."

Yet it was not alone his attack on the high head-dresses that gained brother Thomas the love of the people, but his unsparing censures on the clergy, who heard with equal indignation, as did these fair friends, his extraordinary denunciations. Nevertheless, they feared openly to show their vexations, and kept their vengeance for a convenient occasion; not less annoyed than the ladies, but more politic:—

> Vain privilege poor women have of tongue,
> Men can stand silent and resolve on wrong.

Meantime brother Thomas triumphed, and was treated as an apostle returned to earth to extirpate wickedness and folly. Meetings were held in the open fields to hear him; knights, nobles, and people flocked to listen, and he was always conducted back to his dwelling in the town, which was usually at the house of the richest of the burghers, the bridle of his mule being held by persons of condition. His disciples were treated with equal consideration, and every one who had the honour of entertaining them looked upon it as a distinction. But brother Thomas kept always apart in the room given to him, in solitary

musing, allowing access to few: occasionally he issued forth, and took occasion to inveigh against, and threaten with everlasting punishments, those who permitted their houses to be encumbered with such vehicles of the pastimes of evil as chess-boards, cards, dice, or any instruments which could be used for games of chance. He constrained the women to bring to his feet their *hennins*, and having caused a bonfire to be kindled at the foot of the platform where he preached, he ordered all to be thrown into it, amidst the exulting cries of the delighted lookers on.

As Monstrelet expresses it, he *reigned* in the country in this fashion for the space of five or six months, visiting many notable cities, decrying the luxury of the great, and upholding the lower orders, who ran after him in such multitudes, that there was frequently not less than from sixteen to twenty thousand persons assembled at his discourses.

He caused the men to range themselves on one side, and the women on the other, with a cord extended between the two lines.

He refused money, nor would he allow collections to be made, but he did not decline accepting rich ornaments for the church, nor did he object to his own and his disciples' expenses being paid wherever they sojourned.

He was looked upon with such reverence as being a perfectly pure and holy being, that all persons contended for the happiness of serving

him, and many to this end left their families and enrolled themselves amongst his followers. Amongst others were several noblemen, who considered themselves honoured by his notice.

After this time, without his having met with any opposition or annoyance from the clergy, notwithstanding their known indignation, he quitted the country, much lamented, and embarking at St. Vallery, returned to Brittany his native land.

The end of this story is somewhat startling, and may serve, as no doubt was intended, to prove that the holy church will not allow her members to be insulted with impunity.

Brother Thomas the Carmelite, not content with his first success, returned to the charge, and was incautious enough not only to reappear at Rheims, where he was as bitter as ever against abuses, but to travel still further, and at length to beard the lion in his den at Rome, having arrived there in company with ambassadors from Venice.

He was well received, and lodged at San Paolo, but in a short time Pope Eugenio sent to desire his presence, not, it was asserted, with any intent to injure him, but merely for his pleasure, as he had heard him much spoken of. Brother Thomas, however, was seized with a panic, and declined visiting his Holiness, keeping himself close, and beginning to fear for his own safety. The Pope's message was repeated, and three times the Car-

melite refused to obey the summons: but to escape was now out of his power, the toils were around him and his fate was near. A messenger was sent to San Paolo to summon him a fourth time; but hardly had he reached the threshold of the chamber in which brother Thomas was, than the latter threw himself from the window in an agony of fear: he was instantly pursued as he fled for his life, and dragged to the papal palace, where the Pope having called to his aid the Cardinals of Rouen and Navarre, examined the fugitive with the utmost strictness, and, no doubt to their great sorrow, discovered him to be an arch-heretic, worthy of condign punishment, which they resolved should not be long delayed.

His trial did not take up much time, and his sentence of death having been passed, he was publicly burnt in Rome, for the edification of the people and the offended clergy.

This was a period when punishment was freely administered to those whose opinions were too openly expressed relative to the conduct of the Catholic clergy, and many were the victims of attempted reform. Amongst others, Du Clercq relates the fate of a certain heretic whose execution took place at Evreux in Normandy, in 1453, when any opportunity was gladly seized to exhibit religious zeal, as a set-off to the discomfiture lately experienced in the taking of Constantinople by the Infidels.

The sacrifice in this case was William de l'Ollive, a doctor of theology, and prior of St. Germain en Laye, accused by certain Augustine monks of heresy and *Vaudoisism*, that is to say, of dealings with the powers of evil to obtain worldly advantages, never, in these instances, very clearly defined.

It seemed that the prior, "by the exhortation and temptation of the enemy of mankind, gave himself up, body and soul, to be his servant, in return for permission to enjoy all kinds of delights in this world, but especially to obtain the love of a lady of condition."

Although, under such circumstances, it would have been more natural, and certainly more convenient, to choose an easy and agreeable mode of transporting himself and his fair favourite to a given place, where the Evil One waited for an interview with them, it seems the pair were accustomed to seat themselves on a broomstick, and thus travel at a railroad pace to the council of the lord of darkness, who was accustomed to make his appearance to his friends in the harmless likeness of a sheep.

For many years the prior had amused himself in this questionable manner, and had obtained from his woolly patron all the enjoyments he desired, till at last he was found out, much to the horror and scandal of the virtuous monks, who had long beheld his riches and luxuries

with abhorence, contrasting such unholy pleasures with their own hard crusts and cold stone cells.

At length they combined and resolved to put an end to these rural meetings of the lovers and the wolf in sheep's clothing, and the facts became known. The prior was arrested and thrown into prison, when his own confession, most authentically attested by his accusers, put an end to any doubts of his unholy conduct.

The inquisitor who examined him inquired severely into the doctrines which he had been in the habit of promulgating to the people in times past, when he was sent through the country to preach the faith of Jesus Christ, and severe were the reprimands given by the pious interrogator. "After which remonstrance," says the chronicler, "the said master William, knowing full well that he had been a great sinner towards our Redeemer and Creator, began to weep and lament his misdeeds, and to cry for mercy to God *and justice,* recommending himself to the prayers of all present. Then was he taken to the ditch prepared, to atone for the horrible crime of which he was guilty."

CHAPTER III.

THE BRIDE.—FROISSART'S ACCOUNT OF THE ENTRY INTO PARIS OF ISABEAU DE BAVIERE.—DEVICES.—PROGRESS OF THE PROCESSION.—THE KING EN CROUPE.—THE MASKED BALL.—FACTIONS.—VALENTINA.

THE beautiful Isabeau de Bavière, to whose history it is necessary to return, no sooner appeared before the expectant king, Charles VI., than his heart was immediately enslaved. She knelt on both knees before him, with the most perfect modesty and humility, and he, with hasty gallantry, raised her in the tenderest manner; "regarding her," say the chronicles, "with a sort of transport." The Constable de Clisson who stood by, exclaimed as he marked this first interview,—"By my faith, this lady will stay with us—the king cannot take his eyes off her."

The rapturous exclamations of the susceptible

Charles left no room to doubt the impression the fair stranger had made on him: he not only at once declared his intention of making her his wife, but requested of his uncles that no time might be lost in arranging the marriage, which he desired might take place, on the spot, at Amiens instead of at Arras, which place was proposed. Accordingly the ceremony was concluded in about three months after their first meeting; and Charles VI. received as his companion for life one of the most unworthy although the most beautiful of her sex.

It is natural to suppose that for the first few years of her married life Isabeau, happy and content with the profusion of luxury which surrounded her, showed none of the evil propensities of her nature. The extravagance of her young bridegroom equalled her own; his passion for her knew no bounds, and he had neither the prudence nor the desire to control any of her wishes, which she had no idea of restraining. It is said of Charles VI. that he was so profuse and fond of squandering money, that, where his father was accustomed to give a hundred crowns, he would give a thousand. The fêtes he gave in honour of the birth of several children, were extraordinarily magnificent, and he resolved that the public entry into Paris of his adored queen should be attended with splendours and expense hitherto unthought of.

Froissart describes the grand entry of Isabeau de Bavière into Paris at length in the following terms, and his account is too characteristic not to excite interest.

"On Sunday the 20th day of June, in the year of our Lord 1399, there were such crowds of people in Paris it was marvellous to see them: and on this Sunday the noble ladies of France who were to accompany the queen, assembled in the afternoon at St. Denis, with such of the nobility as were appointed to lead the litters of the queen and her attendants. The citizens of Paris, to the amount of twelve hundred, were mounted on horseback, dressed in uniforms of green and crimson, and lined each side of the road.

"The Queen of France, attended by the Duchess of Berri, the Duchess of Burgundy, the Duchess of Lorraine, the Countess of Nevers, the Lady of Coucy, with a crowd of other ladies, began the procession in open litters, most richly ornamented. The Duchess of Touraine was not in a litter, but, to display herself the more, was mounted on a palfrey, magnificently caparisoned.

"The litter of the queen was led by the Dukes of Touraine and Bourbon at the head: the Dukes of Berri and Burgundy were in the centre, and the Lord Peter of Navarre and the Count d'Ostrevant behind the litter, which was

open, and beautifully ornamented. The Duchess of Touraine followed on her palfrey, led by the Count de la Marche and the Count de Nevers, the whole advancing slowly at a foot's pace. After her came the Duchess of Burgundy and her daughter, the Lady Margaret of Hainault, in an open litter led by the Lord Henry de Bar and Sir William, the young Count of Namur. Then came the Duchess of Berry and the daughter of the Lord de Coucy, in an open and ornamented litter, led by Sir James de Bourbon and Sir Philip d'Artois; then the Duchess of Bar and her daughter, led by Sir Charles d'Albret and the Lord de Coucy. There was no particular mention made of the other ladies and damsels who followed in covered chariots or on palfreys, led by their knights.

"Sergeants and others of the king's officers had full employment, in making way for the procession, and keeping off the crowd; for there were such numbers assembled, it seemed as if all the world had come thither.

"At the gate of St. Denis that opens into Paris, was the representation of a starry firmament, and within it were children dressed as angels, whose singing and chaunting were melodiously sweet. There was also an image of the Virgin, holding in her arms a child, *who at times amused himself with a windmill made of a large walnut.* The upper part of this firmament was richly adorned

with the arms of France and Bavaria, with a brilliant sun dispersing its rays through the heavens; and this sun was the king's device at the ensuing tournaments. The Queen of France and the ladies took delight in viewing this as they passed, as indeed did all who saw it. The queen then advanced slowly to the fountain in the street of St. Denis, which was covered and decorated with fine blue cloth, besprinkled over with golden fleurs-de-lis. The pillars that surrounded the fountain were ornamented with the arms of the chief barons of France; and instead of water, it ran in great streams of Clairé, and excellent Piement, Around this fountain were young girls, handsomely drest, having on their heads caps of solid gold, who sang so sweetly it was a pleasure to hear them, and they held in their hands cups of gold, offering these liquors to all who chose to drink. The queen stopped there to hear and look at them, as did the ladies as they passed by.

"Below the monastery of the Trinity there was a scaffold erected in the street, and on this scaffold a castle, with a representation of the battle with King Saladin, performed by living actors; the Christians on one side, and the Saracens on the other. All the lords of renown who had been present, were represented with their blazoned war coats, such as were worn in those times. A little above was the person of the King of

France, surrounded by his twelve peers, in their proper arms; and when the queen came opposite the scaffold, King Richard was seen to leave his companions and advance to the King of France, to request permission to fight the Saracens, which having obtained, he returned to his army, who instantly began the attack on Saladin and the Saracens. The battle lasted for a considerable time, and was seen with much pleasure.

"The procession then passed on, and came to the second gate of St. Denis, where, like to the first, there had been made a representation of a richly starred firmament, with the Holy Trinity seated in great majesty; and within the heaven little children, as angels, singing very melodiously. As the queen passed under the gate, two angels descended from above, holding an extraordinary rich golden crown, ornamented with precious stones, which they gently placed on the head of the queen, sweetly singing the following verses:

Dame, enclose entre fleur-de-lis
Reine êtes vous de Paris,
De France et de tout le païs,
Nous en r'allons en Paradis.

"When they came opposite the chapel of St. James, they found a scaffold erected on the right hand, richly decorated with tapestry, surrounded by curtains, in the manner of a chamber, within which were men who played finely on organs.

The whole street of St. Denis was covered with a canopy of rich camlet and silk cloths, as if they had had the cloths for nothing, or were at Alexandria or Damascus. I, the writer of this account, was present, and astonished whence such quantities of rich stuffs and ornaments could have come; for all the houses on each side the great street of St. Denis, as far as the Châtelet, or indeed to the great bridge, were hung with tapestries representing various scenes and histories, to the delight of all beholders."

Froissart, with much enthusiasm, goes on to describe how every fountain in Paris was made to run with wine and milk; the streets were all covered from house to house where the royal procession passed, with blue taffeta to represent the sky, through openings in which angels were made to descend and ascend, crowning the fair Isabeau with coronets and garlands, and singing verses in her honour.

One notable device, which, to modern eyes would probably have appeared somewhat clumsy and grotesque, is particularly chronicled as having produced great effect.

Before the grand Châtelet was a bed hung with, and surrounded by, tapestry of azure and fleurs-de-lis of gold. It had the form of a bed of justice. In the midst of it was placed a great stag—the device adopted by the royal husband, and intended to prefigure him—within the body of

the stag a man was concealed, whose movements regulated those of the mysterious animal. Beside him lay a naked sword, which, when the queen arrived on the spot, the stag was made to hold, and salute her with. No doubt she was highly gratified with this delicate compliment, as she paused before the bed of justice in her splendid litter, accompanied by all her ladies, decked in the most gorgeous habits, and she probably detected in the crowd the gallant giver of the festivity, for the young king, eager to observe the effect of these fine shows, sat disguised, *en croupe*, behind Savoisy, one of his treasurers, and looked on with infinite delight, his presence not being suspected by the bystanders. He, however, was thus exposed to some inconvenience, for, having advanced too near the bed of state, he received several rather severe blows from the sergeants-at-arms who were keeping a space round it. This incident, however, only served for sweet discourse and pastime in the evening to the ladies and nobles assembled at a grand entertainment and ball, one of a series which followed in honour of the queen.

It was on the occasion of the last of these balls, a masked one, that it is supposed the Duke of Orleans, brother of the king, encouraged probably by the levity of Isabeau, was excited to make her a declaration of his passion, which was but too well received, and from that fatal night

the irregularities of her future life, and the miseries of her husband and the kingdom, may be said to have dated.

Indeed from the period of Isabeau's entry into Paris she appears to have abandoned herself to all the vices to which her nature was prone, and to have thrown herself headlong into political intrigues, always heading some turbulent party, fomenting dissension, and creating discord. Avaricious, ambitious, cruel, and violent, she resolved that nothing should stand in the way of her desires and resolves: the fatal malady of the unfortunate young king had already begun to show itself, and his numerous relations, instead of feeling pity for his situation, and endeavouring to soothe and avert its consequences, all eager for their own ends, combined to destroy the little reason he had left.

In spite of his extravagance and folly, Charles had a warm and generous heart, and had given so many proofs of his wish to do justice to his people, that he was adored by his subjects, who pitied and loved him the more as they became aware of the designs and evil conduct of those by whom he was surrounded.

Meantime a variety of interests distracted the court; and Isabeau, as unstable as she was violent, instead of adopting the party which declared for the king, attached herself, first to the faction of his brother Orleans, and then to that of Bur-

gundy. Her abandonment of the cause of the Duke of Orleans is supposed to have arisen from the hatred she bore to Valentina de Milan, the wife of the duke, for whom his affection was probably more sincere than suited her views, and the power which that excellent princess had acquired over the afflicted king, who was tenderly attached to her, no doubt increased her dislike, and made her declare herself a partisan of the avowed enemy of his rival, the Duke of Burgundy.

CHAPTER IV.

DESTITUTION OF THE KING.—SIMONET CABOCHE.—J'ENVIE : JE TIENS.—RECONCILIATION.—THE MESSENGER.—THE ASSASSINATION.—ESCAPE OF THE ASSASSINS.—CONSTERNATION.—SUSPICION.—THE KNOTTED CLUB PLANED.

CIRCUMSTANCES, however, induced Queen Isabeau afterwards to return to her original friendship for the brother of the king, at the period when it had been decided that the care of his person was to be confided to her care, and the government of the state to the Duke of Burgundy. Continued quarrels arose out of this arrangement for the care of the king; and the court and the country were kept in a state of commotion in consequence—Isabeau siding always with the most turbulent, and suffering her unfortunate husband to become the prey first of one party and then of another.

Meanwhile the king was personally neglected, in a manner that could scarcely have been the lot of the meanest of his subjects. His table and

his household were unregulated, and the commonest necessaries were withheld from him. His children fared no better; and in the intervals of his madness, which at this stage appear to have been frequent, his mind was harassed by the complaints of the governor of the young princes and princesses, who informed him that they were actually without food or clothing. "Alas!" answered the ill-fated Charles, on one occasion, "I am no better off myself." He held at the moment a gold cup in his hand out of which he had been drinking, which he gave to the governor of his children that it might be sold to provide them with necessaries.

Louis of France the then dauphin, at that time called Monsieur de Guyenne, suffered from privation almost as much as did, in after days, his brother Charles who succeeded him as heir to the throne, Louis dying at the age of nineteen.

The king, as if suddenly awakened from a dream, heard with indignation of the cruelty, injustice, and rapacity, of which himself, his children, and his people were the victims. He convoked a council of all the princes of the blood, amongst whom the Duke of Burgundy was summoned to attend instantly. He lost no time in obeying the command, and arrived well accompanied, to the infinite consternation of the queen and her associates, who foresaw that their conduct would be

too severely investigated for them to escape. The profusion in which the Duke of Orleans lived was looked upon as an insult to the terrible sufferings of the oppressed classes, as well as to the disastrous and pitiable condition of the king's health.

As quickly as possible Isabeau and the Duke of Orleans, now inseparable companions, hastened to quit Paris, and took refuge at Melun, having left orders that the dauphin and the rest of the royal children should be brought to them there, including even the children of the Duke of Burgundy, of whom they desired to obtain possession. But this design was frustrated by the promptitude of the Duke of Burgundy, who was beforehand with the queen, and taking the dauphin under his protection established him at the Louvre with a powerful guard, charging himself with his guardianship and that of Paris, under the title of governor and captain of the city.

The Duke of Burgundy, totally regardless of the havoc which he was certain to bring upon the city of Paris, and only desirous of gaining his own purpose, had raised amongst the populace a band of miscreants capable of any outrage: they were chiefly chosen from the butchers and skinners of cattle, the captain of whom was one Simonet Caboche: the lowest rabble were invited to place themselves under this chief, and the command of the whole of so fearful an army was

conferred on the Sire de Jacqueville, and directed by an apothecary named Jean de Troyes.

This band set forth towards the Rue Saint Antoine, and paused before the hotel where the Duke de Guyenne, eldest son of the king, and the Duke of Burgundy were staying. With loud cries and menaces they demanded that most of the officers of the Duke de Guyenne should be given up, which, after some negotiation, was agreed to. These devoted men were conducted by their furious escort to the Hotel d'Artois, and from thence to the Tour du Bois near the Louvre.

The Duke de Guyenne, before he would consent to give up his officers, made the Duke of Burgundy swear on *a cross of fine gold*, that no evil should befal the prisoners; but the duke's vows appeared only made to be broken, and no mercy was shewn to the victims.

In the same manner the Bastile being delivered up by the governor, Pierre Desessarts, on an oath of security, the too confiding captain was immediately executed.

The two factions of Orleans and Burgundy were now in open hostility, and the devices adopted by the chief of either party in conformity with the custom of the time, are characteristic of their intents. The Duke of Orleans adopted a baton full of knots, with the inscription "J'envie;" while the Burgundian's was a plane, and the

words "Je tiens." The king's name was used as a rallying cry by both, although all the part he was able to take in the business was to look on sadly, and in the intervals of his mental alienation lament over the deplorable condition of his kingdom.

The University of Paris, which had then great influence, exerted itself to obtain a better order of things, and deputations were dispatched to Isabeau and the king's brother Orleans in the hope of reconciling matters. The duke was a man of infinite talent, and his eloquence was equal to that of any professor; he could therefore, in words, well maintain his cause, and his arguments in his own favour and against the Burgundian party were subtle and resolute; and he refused haughtily to give way in any point to a body of men, who, he contended, had no right to interfere in political affairs.

The people, happy for the time to escape from the impositions with which the Duke of Orleans had loaded them, sided with Burgundy. The interference of England was solicited by both sides, and confusion was at its height, when, finding ruin inevitable if this course of action was persisted in, a peace was agreed to, and the heads of the two factions met as if in amity, and took the sacrament together in token of their sincerity.

But this apparent quiet was soon disturbed by an event which plunged the court and those of

the Orleans' party into a state of the utmost consternation and distress. The whole story is most tragical, as told by the chronicler, Monstrelet.

"At this period there happened in the city of Paris the most dolorous and piteous event which had for a long time chanced to the Christian kingdom of France by the death of a single man, causing to the king, the princes of the blood, and generally throughout the kingdom much grief, and sad divisions for a long space.

This was the death of the Duke of Orleans, only brother of the King of France, Charles, the Well-Beloved.

The said duke on a Wednesday, the day of St. Clement, pope, was piteously murdered and put to death about seven o'clock in the evening; the murder being perpetrated by eighteen men, who lodged in an hotel, which had for its sign the image of the Blessed Virgin, near the Porte Barbette, where they had remained for several days waiting their opportunity.

They had as accomplice one named Thomas de Courtheuse, valet-de-chambre to the king, and on this Wednesday they sent him to the Duke of Orleans, who was gone to see the queen in an hotel she had near the said Porte Barbette. The queen was not yet recovered from her confinement of a child deceased as soon as born.

The messenger sent by the conspirators finding the duke where he was sought, delivered to him

a message as from the king, desiring him to hasten to him without delay, as he desired to speak on matters which intimately concerned them both.

The duke was at once deceived, and gave implicit confidence to the traitor, losing no time in mounting his mule, having in his company two squires on horseback, and four or five valets on foot, before and behind, bearing torches. He would not wait for the rest of his suite, who were not prepared to follow so rapidly, consequently he was but poorly attended, although at that moment there were in Paris not less than six hundred of his dependants, as well knights as others.

When he approached the Porte Barbette, the eighteen men who lay in ambush under the wall of a house rushed forth. The night was very dark, and they were not seen till they made the attack, crying violently, "Death! death!" and surrounding the duke, they struck at him, one with the blow of an axe, cutting off his hand at the wrist.

The Duke, thinking he had been set upon by mistake, called out loudly, "I am the Duke of Orleans!" Upon which the assassins replied, continuing to assail him, "You are he we seek!"

He was soon struck from his mule to the ground, and received such furious blows on his head that his brains were scattered on the pave-

ment; they then proceeded to maltreat his dead body, which presented a most frightful spectacle. With him was killed a young squire, a German by birth, who had formerly been his page, and was much attached to him. When he saw his master struck down, he threw himself upon him in the hope of defending his body, but in vain. The horse on which it seems both squires rode, terrified at the tumult, burst away, and rushed madly through the crowd towards the other attendants, who by this time were coming up; immediately after they saw the duke's mule also running violently in the same direction, and concluded that their master had been thrown, and catching the animal, they took him by the bridle to conduct him back to the duke, but, on reaching the spot, they perceived the horrible event which had taken place.

They instantly hurried to the hotel of the queen, crying aloud, "Murder!" while the assassins, according to a preconcerted measure, uttered cries of "Fire!" one of them having set fire to the house in which they had lodged.

Immediately they all set off, some on foot, some on horseback, seeking for concealment where they best might, as they fled casting behind them spiked balls of iron to prevent pursuit.

It was currently rumoured that many of them took shelter in the Hotel d'Artois with their master, the Duke of Burgundy, to whom they

first recounted the success of their enterprise, and afterwards escaped from the city.

The chief of this homicidal band was Raoullet d'Actonville, a Norman, who had been deprived by the Duke of Orleans of a command which had been obtained for him by the late Duke of Burgundy, and it was out of revenge for this injury that he had undertaken to do the horrible deed, but too well executed.

Nothing could equal the terror and grief of the partisans of the Duke of Orleans, when this act was known. The disfigured corpse of the handsome and gallant prince was taken up and borne to the church of St. Guillaume, covered with a white pall, amidst great lamentations; and soon after the King of Sicily, who was then in Paris, and several other princes and knights, hastened to the spot and surrounded the body, weeping and bewailing the fatal event. All night the monks watched and prayed beside the coffin into which the murdered man was put, and the next morning his hand was found, together with some part of his brains, and all was placed in the coffin.

All the princes connected with him, except the king and his children, repaired to the church. Amongst them his cousin-german, the Duke of Burgundy, who took a principal part in the religious ceremonies which followed, being one of those who sustained the pall while the bier was

borne to the church of the Celestins, where the unfortunate prince was buried with many tears and great honour.

The first suspicion fell on Messire Aubert de Chauny, who was known to have a mortal enmity to the duke for having seduced his wife, whom he retained as a favourite, and who had borne him a son—for the morality of the duke was by no means remarkable—but it soon became evident that a more powerful hand had dealt the blow.

As soon as the news reached the queen, weak as she was, her terror overcame her illness, and causing herself to be placed on a litter by her brother, Louis of Bavaria, and accompanied by him and his people, she was taken to the Hotel St. Pol, and lodged in a chamber next to that of the king for greater security. That night many of the great lords, amongst them the Count of St. Pol, armed themselves and their followers, and hastened to establish themselves in the king's palace for his defence, not knowing what dangers might threaten the person of the sovereign.

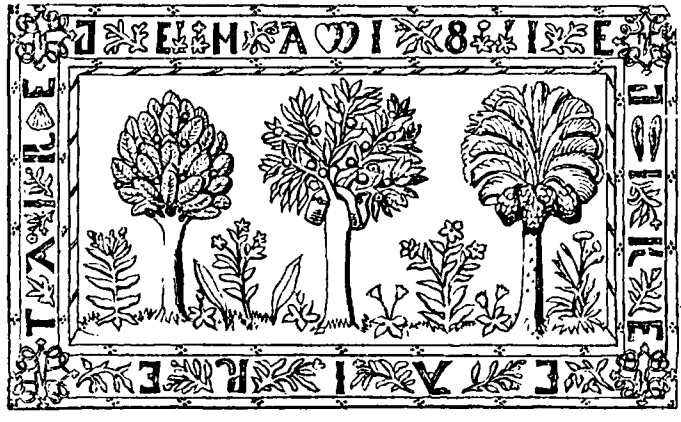
Whatever might have been the suspicions entertained by the princes, who assembled in great numbers to consult on what should be done, no one ventured to name the Duke of Burgundy, who at first appeared to expect to escape detection; but seeing that unlikely, he came to the resolution of boldly avowing himself to be the murderer of

the king's brother, after which he retired from Paris with all convenient secrecy and speed.

The rage of the Orleans party was extreme; and it was with difficulty the King of Sicily could restrain the impetuosity of those armed followers of the late duke, who resolved to follow and take summary vengeance on the murderers.

The people of Paris, who were inimical to the Duke of Orleans, heard of his tragical death unmoved, saying softly to each other, "The knotted club is planed," in allusion to the devices of the rival factions.

"All this," says Monstrelet, "happened in the year of the hard winter 1407, when the frost lasted sixty-six days with terrible severity; and when the thaw occurred, the Pont Neuf of Paris was precipitated into the Seine, and great damage was done by the frost and the floods throughout the kingdom of France."



CHAPTER V.

THE WIDOW.—SORCERY.—ACCUSATIONS.—THE APPEAL.—ROYAL FAMILY LEAVE PARIS. — THE ARMAGNACS. — AZINCOURT. — JUSTICE SOUDAINE. — MANIAC LEADER. — HENRY OF ENGLAND. —MONTEREAU.—ASSASSINATION OF JEAN SANS PEUR.—TREATY OF TROYES.—DEATH OF ISABEAU.

MOURNFUL were the scenes which ensued when the unfortunate Valentina of Milan, widow of the murdered prince, presented herself to the king, with her orphan sons, of which she had three. The tears and lamentations, and the sad spectacle which the bereaved family presented, deeply affected King Charles, who raised her from her knees with tears and embraces, and promised her that justice should be done on the traitors who had committed so execrable a crime.

The duchess and her young daughter-in-law, the widowed Queen of England, daughter of

Charles of France, who was married to the eldest son of the late duke, although he was but thirteen years old, then retired from the king's presence, and placed themselves, with the princes, in the care of their friends, returning to Blois, where they usually resided.

The hopes of Valentina that justice would be done on her husband's assassin were, however, frustrated, for the power of the Duke of Burgundy was such, and he was so extremely popular amongst the lower orders in France, that it was considered impolitic to pursue him too far, and, retired into his own dominions, he drew round him so great a number of adherents that he was able to dictate to those who arraigned him. He caused a clever lawyer to plead his cause, and to set forth the propriety of the step he had taken to rid France and her sovereign of a dangerous enemy, which he insisted upon the late Duke of Orleans having been. Nothing can be so futile and absurd as this defence; nor did it impose on any one, but the power of the duke obliged those who heard it to profess themselves satisfied, and they listened with what patience they might to such folly as the following charges.

That Louis of Orleans had practised magical arts to cause the death of the king by a slow distemper, coveting his rank and possessions. That he had employed several devils, by means

of certain proficients in the black art, to enchant a sword and a ring, destined to injure the king.

Four persons had been gained by his bribes to undertake this diabolical work, and had carried on their incantations in an old tower called La Tour de Montjay, near Lagny-sur-Marne, and were accustomed to repair to a hill in the neighbourhood, where they met certain devils, who delivered to them the instruments they required for their design, directing them to complete the charm, to place a magic ring they gave in the mouth of a dead man, for which end they repaired to the gibbet of Montfaucon by night, and from thence carried off a dead malefactor on a horse to their tower of Montjay; but daylight surprising them, they were obliged to conceal their prey in a stable attached to a house in Paris belonging to one of them, where they completed their wicked plot by placing the ring in the mouth of the corpse, and putting the sword in its body; and thus, says Monstrelet, "in great abomination and horror it remained for several days, according as the devils had ordered."

After this these instruments of evil were taken to the Duke of Orleans, and he was also furnished with powder made of the bones of a malefactor, which the duke wore in a bag next his skin, with what intent is not named; and the discovery of so vile a practice of his bro-

ther's altogether disgusted the king with him when he came to know it.

All the mental attacks of the ill-fated king were charged upon the duke as having been brought about by charms and witchcrafts, sometimes by one means, sometimes by another: and the ravings of his madness were understood to be conscious accusations against the malevolence of his brother. He was said to have exclaimed—

"Oh take away the sword which pierces my heart, which my brother Orleans has put there:" and again, he cried out, "I must kill him!" meaning that one or other of those two must be the victim.

Also the Duke of Milan and his daughter Valentina were accused of being subtle sorcerers, and aiding with the Duke of Orleans in endeavouring to injure the king by their magic arts, which, though often tried, by the grace of God had failed of their entire effect, although the king had suffered much by them.

There were not wanting persons to swear to the truth of such stories as these:

That once the Duke of Orleans and the king being at the Châstel de Néaufle, supping with la Reine Blanche, and sleeping there, the duke had attempted to poison his brother in a dish, passing through the kitchen and throwing a white powder on the meat he was to eat. This plot failed in consequence of Charles refusing

the meat; but the queen's almoner, happening to touch it as he put it into a basket to be distributed to the poor, the mere contact caused him at once to fall as if dead, and he lost his beard, hair, and nails in consequence, fell into a languor, and finally died. And that la Reine Blanche had herself discovered the whole transaction, reproached the duke and informed the king of it.

A fatal accident had befallen several of the noble guests at a banquet given by King Charles, at which they were burnt, in consequence of being dressed as savages, and a torch, approaching them too nearly, having ignited the skins they were wrapped in; the king escaped only through the presence of mind of Madame de Berry, who wrapped him, flaming as he was, in her robe. Every one knew that this sad event was purely accidental; but the Duke of Burgundy insisted that it was a preconcerted scheme of the Duke of Orleans to cause the king's death.

Amongst many other absurdities, the duke was accused of having sent a poisoned apple to the dauphin, which being intercepted by a nurse who held a child in her arms, and given by her to the child, the latter died almost immediately after.

All these things were gravely asserted and listened to by those who found themselves too weak to combat them.

But, on the other hand, Queen Isabeau, who

had left Paris and retired to Melun with her children for greater safety, excited the Duchess of Orleans to make a public appeal against her husband's murderer, and accordingly they all returned to the capital—the widow, her sons, and her friends, in deep mourning, and making a great show of their grief and their wrongs. An harangue was made by the lawyers of the duchess, quite as tedious and strange as that by the Duke of Burgundy's advocate, in which all sorts of authorities are cited to prove the necessity of punishment falling on the guilty. Saint Gregory, Valerius Maximus, Ovid, St. James, Aristotle, the book of Maccabees, and many other singularly jumbled judges are produced in argument, and every charge brought against the murdered duke altogether refuted point by point.

The Duke of Burgundy was pronounced guilty, and a severe sentence of banishment was passed on him, but there was no means of enforcing this by the weaker party, and he laughed at these threats and denunciations.

The king, the queen, and all their family, were injudiciously advised to leave Paris and go to Tours, and no sooner had they done so, than the Parisians informed the Duke of Burgundy of the fact, and invited him to return, which he did in great triumph, amidst cries of "Noel!" and loud acclamations. He was now undisputed master, and could dictate laws to his adversaries, which

fact so afflicted the unfortunate Duchess of Orleans, that she died of grief, leaving her three sons at the mercy of their enemies.

A strange scene now took place at Chartres, where the two eldest orphan princes of Orleans were taken, in order that a temporary reconciliation might be formed, and there, by means of a few false oaths which cost nothing, the Duke of Burgundy was allowed to clear himself of the imputation of murder, and the queen once more agreed to become his partisan.

Nothing could equal the horrible state of the Parisians at this period, divided and torn to pieces alternately by the different parties to which the city fell a prey. A faction with a new name had now sprung up, which was destined long to fill a lamentable part in the ceaseless conflicts which desolated France. Charles of Orleans, now a widower, though still scarcely more than a child, had espoused secondly, Bonne d'Armagnac, the daughter of the Count d'Armagnac, constable of France, who, constituting himself the head of that party opposed to the Burgundian, carried on the conflict which these apparent, but hollow, reconciliations had left undecided.

Just at this juncture war was declared by Henry V. of England, against France.

Then followed the disastrous battle of Azincourt, where the French left twenty-five thousand men dead on the field, and the flower of the

French nobility was either killed or taken prisoner; amongst the latter were the two Princes, Charles of Orleans, and the Duke of Bourbon. The Dauphin, Louis, survived this fatal defeat only two months, and his brother Jean scarcely a year more, dying, as it was supposed, of poison.

By these events Charles of France became the heir of the throne, and he was at this time only thirteen years of age: his father's madness had become confirmed, and the intrigues and perfidy of his mother rendered his position one of the most hazardous and difficult that could be imagined. Accustomed to look upon the Burgundian party with detestation, the young Dauphin gave himself up entirely to the direction of the Count d'Armagnac, whose efforts were directed to thwart the designs of the queen.

Isabeau had contrived to amass enormous sums in jewels and plate, which for security she had deposited in different churches, and this treasure the Count d'Armagnac seized in the name of Charles the Dauphin, for the service of the state, to supply funds requisite to carry on the war with England.

Isabeau, in despair, fled to Vincennes, but was there arrested and sent, under surveillance, to Tours, as it was more than suspected that she entertained relations not only with the Duke of Burgundy, but with the English, who were preparing for another descent on the devoted

country. The irregularity of Isabeau's conduct had of late been undisguised, and public morality rendered it necessary that she should be separated from her unworthy favourites, and that the course of her levity should be violently checked.

So daring had the insolence of her friends become, that they threw aside all outward respect for the king, who, on one occasion, riding in the vicinity of Vincennes, was met by Boisbourdon, a young man who was known to stand too high in the queen's favour. This person, instead of saluting the king in a proper manner, rudely passed him and continued his way, with the air of a prince who had met an inferior; whereupon Charles VI., who was quite aware of the history attached to him, transported with rage, commanded the provost of Paris to hasten after him and conduct him to Paris a prisoner. The insolent young man fearfully expiated his imprudence, for he was immediately placed in a dungeon, heavily ironed, the torture applied to him, and his career closed by strangulation, after which his body was cast into the river, according to what was then called *justice soudaine.*

It appears that Isabeau had always felt an aversion to her younger son, and enraged at his ranging himself with her enemies, she resolved to sacrifice everything to revenge. She contrived to give the Duke of Burgundy notice of her position, and it was not long before he effected her libera-

tion, carrying her off with him to Chartres, where their good understanding, for the evil of France, became more securely cemented than it had ever been before. Under this protection Isabeau wrote letters to all the towns in France, proclaiming the fact of the king having, at the commencement of his malady, constituted her sole protector and regent of the kingdom; commanding them all to pay her allegiance; and, in order to gain their suffrages, promising to remit numerous taxes, at the same time forbidding that any should be paid to the dauphin.

A desperate struggle ensued, in which the whole country suffered every extremity of misery; anarchy and confusion reigned triumphant; and Paris, falling into the hands of the Burgundians, was given up to pillage and massacre. With his friends murdered around him, the unfortunate dauphin, who happened to be asleep when the tumult reached the place where he resided, was taken from his bed by Tanneguy du Châtel, who, wrapping him in his sheets, bore him in his arms to the Bastile, and afterwards managed to conduct him in safety to Melun and Montargis.

At midnight of the 14th July, 1418, a dreadful scene was acted; the king, raving as he was, was seized upon, and forced to head the party of Burgundy, being tutored to command the people to deliver up the Armagnacs. The populace being thus excited, all acted like

maniacs, and the slaughter and destruction are terrible to record.

The Duke of Burgundy, who, with the queen, had kept out of sight during these scenes, now re-entered Paris in triumph, having entire possession of the royal family, with the exception of the dauphin, who was fortunately out of his reach, and in whose person was concentred the last remnant of the monarchy of France.

Every art was used to induce Charles to join his mother in Paris: but his friends rallied round him, and inspiring him with firm resolution to resist every offer and every snare, he escaped the machinations of his enemies, and fortified himself against attacks which menaced him on all sides, both from domestic perfidy, and the ambition of England, now in possession of great part of his desolated country.

Henry V. of England, invited to a negotiation with the Duke of Burgundy and Isabeau, was offered the hand of the beautiful princess Catherine; but he was too politic a prince to be soon taken with the bait; and, insisting on more advantages than the Burgundian thought it wise to concede, their conference was broken off, and all arrangements stopped for the time.

Henry then made a proposition to the dauphin to assist him in obtaining possession of his rights; but to his great honour, notwithstanding the distressing position of his affairs, he at once refused

his aid, fearing to bring against his country a more formidable foe than any that had yet devastated it.

Having rejected this tempting offer of assistance, Charles began to consider the propriety of attempting to negotiate with the other party, in order by this means to put some check on the destructive civil commotions which desolated France.

The Duke of Burgundy had at length become so unpopular, that he thought his interest more likely to be served if he could gain over the dauphin, and he therefore readily listened to proposals of accommodation coming from him. A scene of violence and treachery now followed, only equalled by that of the murder of the Duke of Orleans some years before. The partisans of the dauphin were well aware that, in the event of a reconciliation, not one of them would be safe from the vengeance of their inveterate foes, and they therefore resolved to take the affair at once into their own hands.

A meeting had been agreed upon at Montereau-faut-Yonne between the dauphin and his powerful and wily rival, and there it was resolved that a deed should be done which should for ever put an end to contentions, unlikely to discontinue without some forcible step was taken from which there could be no appeal.

Tanneguy du Châtel in particular felt that he

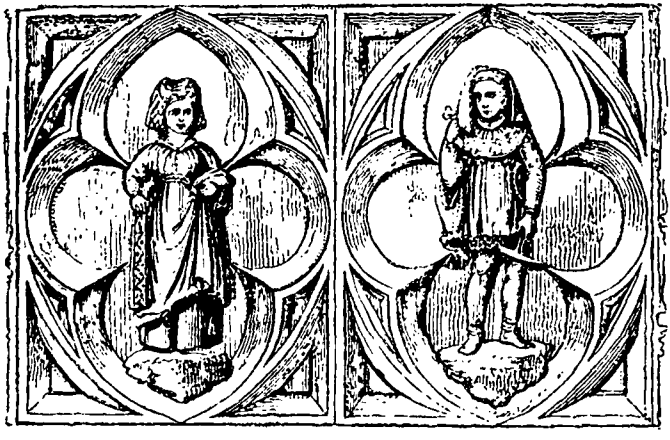
was a particular object of enmity to Duke Jean, and several others were equally ready to rid the country of a dangerous foe, who was known to be plotting with England, and who had consented to deliver up the country to the power of her natural enemy, in order to secure his own advantage. It was believed also by many that the duke had caused both the dauphins to be poisoned, and that the life of Charles was by no means secure against his treachery.

It required, however, very few arguments to satisfy men determined on a purpose that they were acting conscientiously, and there was no hesitation in the minds of any of the conspirators when they met Jean Sans Peur at the bridge of Montereau, and, on a signal from Tanneguy du Châtel the redoubtable Duke of Burgundy fell, pierced with a mortal wound.

But this stroke of questionable policy was far from being attended with the happy results anticipated by the actors. The fury of Isabeau on hearing of the catastrophe knew no bounds; and her inveteracy against her son rose to its height; she immediately sent messengers to the successor of Duke Jean, offering her aid to revenge the death of his father: and she also sent to invite the King of England to join in a league against the dauphin Charles. Henry of England acceded to the offers of peace made to him, and on the 21st of May, 1420, the disgraceful treaty of Troyes was

signed, by which it was agreed that Henry should espouse Catherine of France, that after the death of Charles VI. the crown of France should become his inheritance, to the exclusion of the rightful heir; and that in the mean time he should receive the oaths and the homage of the vassals of the crown. It was stipulated that Henry should use all his endeavours to subdue the partisans of the dauphin, and he was in future to take the title of heir and regent of France, while the real heir was styled the "soi-disant dauphin."

The after-fate of this unnatural mother who had been to France by choice what the innocent Florinda was to Spain, by the introduction of a foreign sway, was such as her crimes deserved: after all parties had availed themselves of her instrumentality to gain their own ends, she fell into such complete contempt, that her existence seemed hardly noticed; and the taunts heaped upon her, the detestation in which she was held, and her mortification on finding that her plots had failed in subduing the spirit or repressing the victorious arms of her son, all combined to overwhelm her with shame and sorrow, which finally ended her life. She died in Paris at the Hotel St. Pol, the last day of September, 1435, and was buried without honour by her grudging partisans the English, who considered four tapers and four mourners sufficient ceremony for the burial of this once gorgeous and magnificent princess.



CHAPTER VI.

CHARLES LE BIEN INSTRUIT.—LE ROI DE BOURGES.—CHARACTER OF THE KING. — LABOURER'S SONG. — GOLDEN AGE. — THE KING'S POSITION.—HIS FAVOURITES.—HIS HOPELESSNESS.

In the midst of anarchy and confusion, his throne usurped by strangers, his wife a traitor to him and her country, his heir proscribed, and himself insane, the ill-starred Charles the Well-beloved, of France, breathed his last, and young Henry VI. of England was proclaimed king over his bier. This was in October, 1422, and the tidings of his being a king without a kingdom were taken to Charles the dauphin, then called the Duke of Touraine: they reached him in Le Velay, where he had taken refuge with a few followers near Le Puy in Auvergne, at a small castle belonging to the Bishop of Le Puy, called Espally.

The castle of Espally has sustained many sieges since that time, and is now a mass of wild ruins, based on basaltic rocks, a fitting scene for the meeting of so desolate a band as that of Charles le Bien Instruit, as the prince was then called. In the vaults of that castle he was proclaimed king of France.

He received the news of his father's death with great sorrow and many tears, for he no doubt thought of all the miseries and misfortunes that had been the lot of that persecuted monarch; and he mourned also over his own inability formerly to have assisted him, or at the present moment to rescue his kingdom from its fearful state of civil and foreign aggression.

For the first day he habited himself in mourning, and wept abundantly: the next morning a solemn mass was performed, at which he assisted, clothed in a royal scarlet robe, while his followers exhibited the blazons of their rank. The banner of France was then raised in the chapel, and cries were uttered of "Vive le Roi!" The service then proceeded, but no other ceremony followed. From that day all those attached to him gave him the title of King of France.

In other parts of the kingdom, however, he was known by the insulting title of "Roi de Bourges," given him by the English, for it was in that city of Berry where he chiefly resided, and where he was first received and proclaimed

by the faithful townsmen, who never swerved from their fidelity to him, first or last.

Charles had just reached his twentieth year, and had known adversity the greatest part of his life, but, at the same time, he had never been without staunch and true adherents, and even at that period was well called, besides le Bien Instruit, le Bien Servi.*

The character of Charles VII. was scarcely at this time formed: he probably possessed all the valour of his race, and had, doubtless, the enthusiasm of youth, together with many of its follies, but he was extremely beloved by his friends, and excited that interest which a young and disinherited prince, pursued by enemies and the utmost severity of fortune, would naturally inspire in the hearts of true patriots.

If he merited the character drawn of him by the historian, Jean Chartier, he was, indeed, the

* In return for the invariable loyalty of the town of Bourges towards him in his distresses, Charles VII. granted the citizens many privileges confirmed by letters patent dated 5th May, 1437.

"In consideration that in the said our city of Bourges before other towns and cities of the marches and elsewhere, we entered and were greatly and notably received, and full obedience and honour shown us by the burghers and citizens as to their sovereign and natural lord, the only son and heir of our late lord and father: thus giving an example to our other subjects of Poictou and Auvergne, and other of our countries beyond, who likewise following them, received and obeyed us according to their duty."

model of a king, but it may be permitted to doubt the exact truth of so flattering a picture.

"His mind dwelt continually on the affairs of his kingdom, and the amelioration of the condition of his people was his predominant desire. He made himself thoroughly conversant with the characters of those who surrounded him; he caused the most minute account to be rendered to him of all petitions which were brought him: he attended scrupulously to all affairs of finance, watched over the execution of his ordinances and edicts, read all his dispatches, and never signed one without having thoroughly examined it. His councils were regulated and arranged for the week. Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, he conferred with the chancellor on the important subject of the re-establishment of law and justice, which the long wars had strangely disordered; on Wednesday he met his marshals and chief officers on military affairs, and on the same day, as well as on Friday and Saturday, he examined the state of his finance. It was only on Thursday that he allowed himself a few hours of recreation.

"With respect to his private habits he took but two meals a day; he spoke little, and drank less; he usually ate alone, except on solemn fêtes, when he appeared seated at table between a bishop or abbot, and a prince of the blood: he heard three masses a day, two short high masses and two

low, and he never omitted his devotional prayers. When he travelled he was always followed by different workmen, whose business it was to work for the poor: he distributed alms liberally, gave dowers to indigent young women, repaired churches and hospitals, and richly adorned them. His word was the word of a prince, and was held as law. Such was his moderation and justice, that, even in time of war, labourers were not forced to leave their fields or desert their dwellings; on the contrary, they enjoyed all the blessings of peace."

It must be confessed that Charles VII. was no less happy in his panegyrists than his supporters, for we read this lament for his death by the celebrated poet of his time, Martial D'Auvergne:—

THE LABOURER'S SONG.

TIME was when we might dance and sing,
When ev'ry day fresh joy could bring:
When each in his estate was blest
And none were woeful, none distrest:
But farewell now those happy days,
I grieve, alas! to speak their praise!

Then toil and labour was secure,
Our hearths were safe, our fields were sure.
None did us wrong by word or deed
Or sudden vengeance was his meed.
But now our hope is overthrown.—
Alas! the happy days I've known!

Then peace and tranquil thoughts could please,
Our days were bliss our nights were ease:

For we were kept and guarded nigh
By justice and authority.
The rich and poor were equal made;
None were oppress'd and none afraid.
Of corn and wine was ample store—
Alas! those days are now no more!

Without relying implicitly on this golden legend, we may believe that during the reign of Charles VII. a great change for the better was operated in France, and that it was then the long harassed country began to recover its prosperity. The President Hénault is, perhaps, too severe when he pronounces on the king that "he was in some sort a mere witness of the wonders of his reign;" and Polydore Virgil too partial when he says, "This prince was the glory of the French, the ornament and restorer of France."

The following remark of a modern author is in another spirit, and only too correct:—"Charles certainly possessed talent and judgment, and, perhaps, some goodness of heart, although he in after years sacrificed the latter quality to what he considered expediency. There is reason to think he was an unfaithful husband, but he had the merit of concealing his weakness under the guise of propriety, and neutralized as much as possible the bad example he set by his connexion with the beautiful Agnes Sorel, by casting over their amours the veil of secrecy and mystery."

Both Agnes, the celebrated favourite, and the queen were true patriots; and, it would appear that they forgot their own feelings and jealousies in the common cause of their country, and their desire to render Charles worthy of the high rank he bore in Europe.

But of all those who proved themselves the disinterested friends of their monarch in every position into which his variable fortune cast him none is more distinguished than he whose devotion consoled him, whose councils assisted, and whose wealth enriched him throughout a series of years. This rare and true friend was Jacques Cœur, his argentier, the founder of the commercial importance of his native country, and the benefactor of France and her king.

Not only was the position of the young king, at the time when he appears first to have been intimate with Jacques Cœur, one of the least promising that can well be imagined, but that of the country to the government of which his title was unjustly disputed, for it was arrived at the highest point of destitution and anarchy. Nevertheless his little band of friends were true, and bent on re-establishing their rightful prince and saving France; and for a series of years his court was the rendezvous of heroes, whose names live in story like the Paladins of Charlemagne, and the same romantic interest attaches to them. There were Lahire, Saintrailles, Chabannes, Richemont, Du-

nois, and a host of followers ready to rally round their chief at all moments, and support him under all difficulties; and though he was not superior to many monarchs who had less excuse for resorting for amusement to unworthy favourites, still he was not obstinate in perseverance in such indulgences, when his real friends represented to him the evil that would result from them.

At one time so hopeless did the state of the disinherited prince's fortunes appear, that he was led to deliberate whether he should abandon his birthright altogether, and seek an asylum in Spain or in Scotland, or fly to some remote corner of Dauphiné, and there be content with a mere existence.

Occasionally it is evident that his resolution was on the point of giving way, as is proved by the energetic measures his friends found it necessary to take to prevent his failing in his duty. About to abandon all his hopes to indolence, he at one period gave himself up to his mercenary favourites, Giac and Le Camus de Beaulieu, from whose enervating example and malpractices he was only delivered by the violence of his captains, who used the strong arm of force to rid him of such dangerous companions.

" In January 1427," says Denis Godefroi in his history, " the Compte de Richemont, constable of France, the Sire de la Tremouille, and the Sire d'Albert, came to Issoudun during the night, and

carried off the Sieur de Giac, the king's favourite, and, without leaving him time to dress, made him mount a wretched horse, and a short time afterwards *drowned him.*

"The Count de Richemont, one of the chief actors in this murder, afterwards married the widow of the Sieur de Giac."

Having so successfully begun their reform, the same personages resolved on a similar act in the following year, and giving the command of the expedition to the Marshal de Bossac, they seized another of the king's favourites, named Camus de Beaulieu, and put him to death in the same summary manner.

The queen, Marie d'Anjou, was forced sometimes to use all the powers of her rightly regulated mind to bring her husband to a sense of his danger, and his fair friend Agnes, it is said, had recourse to taunts to shame him into exertion. A miracle was necessary to rouse him into energy, and the mission of Jeanne d'Arc was judiciously arranged by those who saw too plainly that mere arguments would fail of the desired effect.

CHAPTER VII.

POETS.—ALAIN CHARTIER.—MARGUERITE D'ECOSSE.

THE poets were not mute on these occasions when their exhortations could avail; and Alain Chartier, the first of his time, poured forth such strains as the following, in order to awaken in the dispirited king a courage, on which long adversity naturally had its distressing effect.

ALAIN CHARTIER

"AU DIXIESME AN DE MON DOLENT EXIL."

TEN seasons of a hapless exile's life
With ceaseless woes and frequent perils rife,
Opprest with suffering past and present care,
Of which Heaven will'd that I should have my share,
Brief time had I to dwell on history's page,
Or with heroic deeds my mind engage,
To trace the rapid steps of chiefs, whose fame
Has given to glorious France her deathless name,
Who ruled with sov'reign right, sublime and sage,
And left unstain'd the noble heritage

To sons who saw, beneath their wise command,
Encreased the power and glory of the land;
Their manners kept, their precepts made their guide,
And followed where they led with filial pride:
Beloved and honoured through their wide domain,
And fear'd where foreign shores the waves restrain:
Just in each act, in friendship never slow,
Stern to the bad, and haughty to the foe.
Ardent in honour, in adventure warm,
All good protecting, and chastising harm:
Reigning with justice and with mercy blest,
Sway, strength and conquest on their mighty crest.

'Twas thus they liv'd—'twas thus the land was sway'd,
By equity a peerless region made,
And leaving, after countless victories past,
Their country Peace and glorious Fame at last.

Oh great and envied lot! ordain'd by Heaven,
And for their virtues to our fathers given,
Whose lives pass'd on ere Death, undreaded, came,
Calm and secure in the repose of Fame.

But we—ah, wretches!—we, whose stars malign
Did at our birth in evil spells combine,
And cast us forth to view our country's fall,
Our wrongs a mockery and reproach to all!
And those, once honour'd, just, revered, and high,
Now slaves, confounded in their misery.
Ah, wretched exiles! shunn'd, despised, forlorn,
Who every ill of Fate have tried and borne;
Who, day by day, lament our blasted fame,
And, hunted, helpless, lost, grow old in shame!
Deserted! outcast!—and is this our due,
For following right, and keeping truth in view?

Alas! what bitter thoughts, what vain regret
Our ever-wakeful hearts would fain forget.

Those vanish'd hours no sorrow can restore,
Our land another's, and our friends no more!
We dare not towards the future turn our eyes,
So little hope our dismal lot supplies
While we behold fair France contemn'd, o'erthrown,
And in her low estate deplore our own.

And how should I, though youth my lays inspire,
To joyous numbers rouse my slumb'ring lyre?
Ah! in its strain far other accents flow.—
No joy can issue from the soul of woe!
Grief, dread, and doubt, and adverse fortune still
Besiege my thoughts, and turn their course to ill;
Till fainting genius, fancy, wit decline,
And all is chang'd that once I deem'd was mine.

Sorrow has made me, with his touch so cold,
In early years unnaturally old:
Subdues my powers, contemns my thirst for praise,
And dictates all my melancholy lays!

The poet Alain Chartier was secretary to Charles VII., as he had before been to Charles VI., and was held in great honour at the court. There is a well known story proving the esteem which he enjoyed, which shows at the same time the manners of the age.

Marguerite d'Ecosse, wife of the Dauphin Louis, was passing through a chamber where the poet lay asleep, and, approaching him, she stooped and kissed his lips. On her attendant ladies expressing surprise at her bestowing on him so singular a mark of favour, she replied, "I have not kissed the man, but the mouth from whence so many beautiful sentiments have issued."

His poetry possesses infinite merit, and the tenderness he at times displays, when he does not fetter his verses with the absurd ornaments then considered admirable, was no doubt calculated to please a princess who found little in her married life to charm her from her wish to die, so sadly expressed at her last hour, when those around her, comforting her with the hope of recovery, and the enjoyment of many days to come, she said—"Fie de la vie! ne m'en parlez plus!"

Marguerite was the daughter of James Stuart, King of Scots, and became the affianced wife of Louis the Dauphin, afterwards Louis XI., then only four years old, when she herself had scarcely seen three summers. This marriage was confirmed at Tours, 24th of June 1436, eight years afterwards, when neither bride nor bridegroom were much more than infants still.

Charles VII. was extremely desirous of securing the friendship of Scotland, but it was equally the interest of England to thwart those views. Accordingly, when the baby bride embarked on her way to France, English vessels were stationed on the seas to capture the ship in which she sailed. Menaces and promises were used to induce the King of Scots to give up his ally, but to no purpose; and little Marguerite was sent off on her perilous voyage. The English vessels, however, allowed their prey to escape

them, for while they were contending with several Spanish ships, which defended some merchant vessels of which they had taken possession, Marguerite was able to land at La Rochelle, and was conducted to Tours with all the pomp imaginable.

It was scarcely likely that a prince so bare of good or pleasing qualities as the dauphin Louis, should make a good or kind husband, and the innocent bride, it appears, must have passed the remainder of her short life without finding affection to replace that of her parents, so soon lost to her.

No wonder, therefore, that she listened with pleasure to the soothing minstrelsy of the *biendisant Alain*, as the poet was called, for the heart that mourns is always peculiarly alive to the power of poesy.

She is said to have possessed a great taste for letters, and to have encouraged learned men as much as lay in her power.

Marguerite left no children, and Louis the dauphin re-married soon after. It does not appear that he made a better husband to his second than to his first wife, for there was assuredly no tenderness in his nature; he always kept his title to the description given of him by historians, that he was "mauvais fils, mauvais père, mauvais frère, mauvais sujet, ennemi dangereux, mauvais allié, et mauvais mari."

It is fortunate for the reputation of Louis, that, amongst his numerous bad qualities, that of "mauvais roi" could not be justly included. The political skill with which he defeated his enemies abroad, the courage which broke down the iron yoke of feudal power, and the broad and sagacious views which he entertained and carried out for the advantage of France, rank him among the ablest monarchs that have ascended the throne of that country..

Mathieu de Coussy mentions the death of Marguerite as having happened at a time of rejoicing, at Chalons-sur-Marne in 1444, when a reconciliation was effected between Charles VII. and the Count of Armagnac, who, having come with a great many followers to demand justice of Charles, found it more expedient to solicit his pardon for former offences, which being granted from policy, it was considered a happy event, worthy to be celebrated by a series of festivities, in the midst of which the young dauphiness was suddenly taken ill.

"While these sumptuous feasts and gaieties, jousts and other *joyeusetés* were going on, there occurred a mischance which greatly troubled and displeased all the company. This was, that the dauphine, daughter of the King of Scotland, who was of tender age, beautiful and well formed, and who, according to the report of many persons worthy of credit, who had often seen her,

was provided and adorned with all good conditions and advantages that a high and noble lady could have, was seized with a malady, under which she sunk in the course of a few days.

"Her loss caused infinite mourning and lamentation to all who knew her, and who were of the court, but chiefly to the king and the queen, and *the dauphin her husband.*"

She was buried with great solemnity in the church of Chalons, and, the happy scene of gaiety thus changed to gloom, the royal family and their suite sadly quitted the town and repaired to Sens in Burgundy.

The sorrow inspired by her death found an interpreter who deeply felt it, in her poet Alain Chartier, who thus utters his lament:

"SI DISOYE; IL FAULT QUE JE CESSE."

YES, I must cease to breathe the song,
At once must lay my harp aside,
No more to me may joy belong,
It withered when my lady died!
In vain my lips essay to smile,
My eyes are filled with tears the while:
In vain I strive to force my lays
Back to the dreams of former days.

Let others sing whom Love has left
Some ray of hope amidst their grief,
Who are not of all bliss bereft,
And still can find in verse relief.
The thoughts, by Fancy beauteous made,
All now are changed to endless gloom,
And, following still my dear one's shade,
Sleep with her in her early tomb!

It would appear that the two sisters of Marguerite d' Ecosse accompanied her to France, and remained at the court, apparently at the expense of the king, to judge by certain accounts in which their names occur.

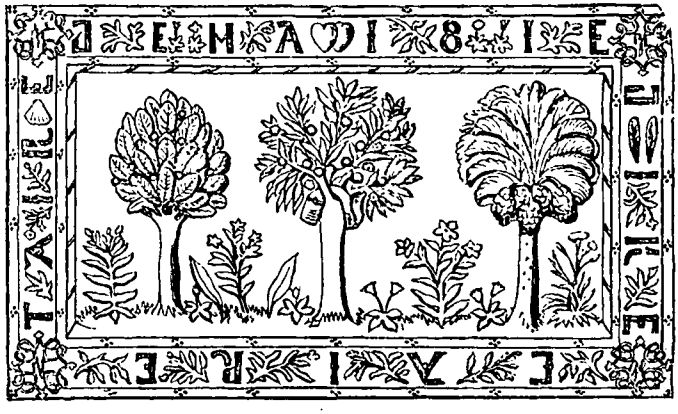
"Pour deux tabliers ouvrés pour la table de mes dictes dames, contenant six aulnes."

Compte des dépenses de Jehanne et Aliénor sœurs de Marguerite d' Ecosse, première femme de Louis XI. 1447.

Another entry of expenses and receipts is in the same MS.

"De maistre Jehan de Xaincoings, notaire et secrétaire du roy et receveur général de toutes les finances du dict seigneur, la somme de 7m. 11c. livres tournois."

Compte de recette et dépense de Jehanne et Aliénor rendu par Jean des Quartes, 1447.



CHAPTER VIII.

BOURGES CATHEDRAL. — THE ROMANS. — LOUIS XI. — ARMS OF BOURGES.—THE HOLY ASS.

THE town of Bourges, the capital of the ancient province of Berry, and now of the department of Cher, was, from a very early period of history, a place of great importance; and though it has in the course of time fallen into a state of extreme neglect and dilapidation, its fortunes are at this moment reviving, and it bids fair to become once again a flourishing and commercial city.

Being situated nearly in the centre of France, its position gives it many advantages which, from time to time, have appeared evident to the existing government, and it is accordingly made use of for purposes which no other town could so well supply. The great southern rail-road which is now rapidly approaching it, will bring much in

its train, and will introduce it to many a traveller who has hitherto been scarcely aware of its existence. Extensive barracks have been erected there, and Bourges is now a grand depôt of artillery: old houses and streets are disappearing, new ramparts and defences are being erected, and in the course of a few years it may resume something of its former grandeur, of which it must be confessed, that very little appears to remain, to one merely passing through its ill-paved and slovenly streets.

Were it however even worse, and more disagreeably neglected than it is, it possesses attractions such as few other towns can offer, rich as France is in historical monuments of greater general interest than any other country in Europe can offer. The chief treasures of Bourges may be esteemed the house of Jacques Cœur and the Cathedral of Saint Etienne.

The beautiful cathedral is certainly superior to almost every other in the kingdom. The grandeur and solemnity of its aisles, their height and form, the splendour of its windows, and the exquisite grace of its architecture claim for it a place amongst the most glorious structures in Christendom. Though unfinished, like the cathedrals of Reims, Chartres, Amiens, Beauvais, and many others, it still presents an imposing pile in the very grandest style of architecture.

It stands in an elevated part of the town near

the handsome palace of the archbishop, and is less encumbered with streets and buildings than most of these fine structures. Its form is circular at the eastern extremity, where it is surrounded by five little chapels.

It possesses a very curious crypt, the vaults of which are supported by columns in groups, and where there is an altar corresponding to that above in the upper part of the cathedral.

Enormous masses closely surrounded by small slender columns of the most exquisite delicacy support the immense roof, and appear of extraordinary height, being uninterrupted by capitals till they nearly reach the top, and are lost in the wide sweep of the bold arch of the principal nave. Nothing can surpass the magnificent proportions of this unrivalled roof, supported by sixty piers; and the mind is lost in admiration of the sublimity of its effect.

There are five naves, adorned with galleries and arcades of great beauty, and the slender and towering groups of pillars springing up on all sides, like young trees in a solemn forest, deceive the eye till they appear multiplied without end. A singular feature in this cathedral is, that it is without transepts.

Nothing can exceed the magnificence of the beautiful painted windows, which do not yield in gorgeousness to those of Reims, Chartres, or Rouen; they have been placed at various periods,

and offer specimens from the twelfth to the seventeenth century, all splendid and of the highest order of beauty. The colours, like molten jewels, gleam in the piercing light which in vain struggles for admission, leaving the church in a rich gloom, where awful shadows seem to float between the clustered pillars of the numerous naves, and the eighteen chapels which extend beyond the outer aisle.

One of the most beautiful of these chapels, as well as the sacristy, was built by Jacques Cœur and his son Jean, archbishop of Bourges. The door of the sacristy is finely sculptured in the style of the argentier's house.

In the crypt is the monument of Jean le Magnifique, Duke de Berry, brother of Charles V., one of the most remarkable of its kind, and very similar in its style to the beautiful tomb of Philippe le Hardy at Dijon.

The Duke de Berry lies in effigy on his tomb, and the statue is fine, with a powerful head and expressive countenance: most of the twenty-four *pleureuses* which once adorned the niches round, have disappeared; some however, have been gathered together in the museum of the town, and are not entirely lost to the admirers of art. Groups of angels formerly hovered over this tomb, which has been much mutilated and its ornaments scattered in various parts of the church.

This monument was originally erected in the

Sainte Chapelle of Bourges, built by Jean le Magnifique, of which a model now only exists.

The exterior of this majestic building is very imposing, although its two towers are of unequal height and in different styles. The western façade has five portals in deep recesses, richly sculptured, all lately restored in an admirable manner.

The lateral doorways on the north and south sides have circular Norman arches, and the open porch which leads to them is a model of grace and elaborate finish. Tradition asserts, that these doors belonged to an earlier church, probably built about the end of the twelfth century on this spot: there are remains of frescoes still to be traced on the roof of the porch, and several of the statues round retain portions of their original colouring.

This cathedral is the great pride of Bourges, and is justly ranked amongst the most splendid structures of France. There are the remains of a great many other churches in the town, all once of great importance, but now more or less mutilated and possessing little interest in comparison with St. Etienne.

Bourges was said to be so beautiful a city, that the Romans could not resolve to destroy it as they did so many of their conquests in Celtic Gaul. It was surrounded by fine ramparts which still exist as promenades; and there is scarcely a

house the cellars of which do not exhibit remarkable specimens of Celtic construction.

There is no accredited palace at which Charles VII. was said to have resided in the town, but Louis XI. was certainly born here. And it is probable that the beautiful mansion, now the convent of Les Sœurs Blues, in the Rue des Veilles Grisons, was the residence of the Roi de Bourges, where the heir of his disputed kingdom first saw the light.

This mansion is full of interest, and though much of the remaining architecture is of a later date than the time of Charles VII., yet there is still a great deal undoubtedly of that period. The chapel in particular has features peculiar to the time, and here, doubtless, Louis XI. was christened.

But the chief attraction in this curious old town is the Hotel de la Chaussée, now the Hotel de Ville, built by the argentier of Charles VII., and adorned by him with all the magnificence which wealth could procure of the highest order of art.

The ridiculous and extraordinary arms of Bourges, of *an ass in an arm-chair*, have long ceased to be acknowledged by the citizens, who have adopted instead, silver sheep, and gold fleurs-de-lis. In some ancient charters and letters-patent, the arms exhibited are still very peculiar, having for supporters a shepherd and shepherdess,

dressed half in red, half in green, the colours of the town, each holding a dog in a leash, and bearing a crook, with this legend: "Summa imperii penes Bituriges."

With respect to the seated ass, the doctor Bordelou, of the university of Bourges, relates that he had seen in a commentator of Cæsar, in the Vatican library, an account of a certain Asinius Pollio, a Roman consul, who, suffering from the gout, ordered himself to be transported in a litter to the ramparts of Bourges, which was then beseiged, it is not said at what time, or by whom; but Asinius himself is said to have been a Gaulish chief lieutenant of Verkingetorich.

This is a somewhat far-fetched derivation, and not so probable as that the inexplicable representation alluded to the part which the animal in question was accustomed to play in the religious processions of the time. At Bourges, in particular, the Fête de l'Ane was kept with infinite ceremony, a custom by no means, however, confined to Berry, but popular in many other districts of France.

Some persons have thought that this heraldry was derived from the prevalence of the prefix Asn to many towns in the neighbourhood of Bourges, as for instance, le fief de l'Asnerie, d'Asnières, &c.

The ass on which the Saviour rode, and that

ridden by the Virgin Mary, was held in great veneration in catholic countries, as well as the mule of Zacarias the Jew, which, in 1220, was recorded to have fallen on its knees before an altar: if he did this from devotion, the step was not great to seating himself in an arm-chair.

In more than one convent and church the bones of the holy ass have been exhibited to believers, and kept with great care as precious relics; but it does not appear that such relics formed any part of the treasury of the beautiful cathedral of Bourges.

In Italy the holy ass was believed to have arrived, having crossed the seas from Jerusalem dry shod, and to have died at a certain town, where his undoubted bones were long seen, inclosed in an artificial ass, and carefully guarded by four canons, who twice a year paraded the relics in procession.

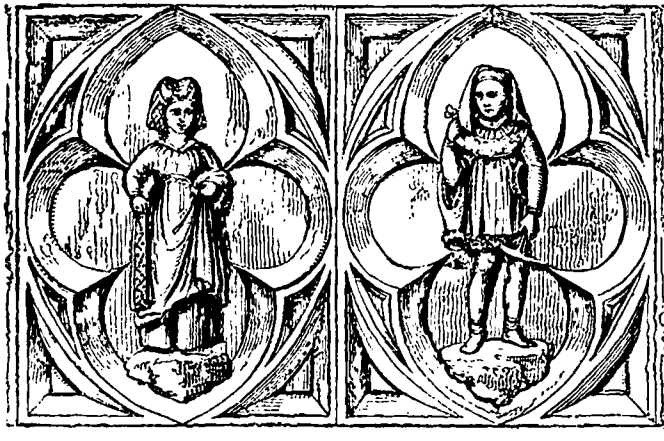
It was at Notre Dame de Salles, at Bourges, that the Fête de l'Ane was celebrated with the greatest pomp; but nothing seems to explain the cause of the symbol appearing in the arms of the town.

Since the twelfth century this fête was an important one in many parts of France, at various cathedrals. The ceremonies varied according to locality; and at Bourges its celebration continued till 1682.

The ass was admitted to the solemn feasts of

the church, and particularly to those of christmas. The she-ass of scripture enjoyed the same privileges, and figured in the processions of Palm Sunday.

The she-ass of Balaam was reverenced at Rouen and at Sens, and was the chief character in the mysteries of the time.



CHAPTER IX.

JACQUES CŒUR'S FATHER.—NICOLAS FLAMEL.—PAUL LUQAS.—THE BOOK.—THE RED STONE.—FERRAND DE CORDUBE.—HIS DISAPPEARANCE.—MAGIC STONE.—SUPERNATURAL WEALTH.

JACQUES CŒUR, or Cuer, as the name was then pronounced, was born at Bourges in Berry, about the end of the fourteenth, or the beginning of the fifteenth, century, for the exact date of his birth is not ascertained; neither are chroniclers decided respecting the profession of his father, or his own position during his earliest years.

Some writers assert that Pierre Cœur the father was a goldsmith of Bourges; others say he was a fur merchant, and that his son was apprenticed to him. It is asserted that Jacques was a mercer in a small way at the beginning of his career, and that he was so poor that he found it impossible to

carry on his business: by a fortunate accident, says this legend, he met with Raymond Lulli of Majorca, who instructed him in the art of making gold, which he taught his father, and that in this way their fortunes were made, which they, however, concealed, *feigning* to have prospered in commerce.

Unfortunately for this story, Raymond Lulli was dead a century, at least, before the event.

That Pierre Cœur might have been intimate with Nicolas Flamel, an equally great master of the marvellous art of gold making, there is no reason to doubt, as he lived in his time, and several circumstances warrant the supposition.

Their friendship would naturally cause him to share the suspicions of art-magic attached to that celebrated philosopher, of whom the memory was long preserved by his numerous pious foundations. The beautiful portal of the church of St. Jacques de la Boucherie in Paris, was built at his expense, and his likeness, and that of his wife Pernelle, long adorned many parts of the church, where they were repeated. At one of the doors which opened to the Rue des Ecrivains, these sculptures appeared with the following inscription:

"The late Nicolas Flamel, formerly a notary, has left by his will to this church certain rents and houses acquired and bought by him, during his lifetime, for certain divine services and charitable distributions to be made every year for the benefit of the Quinze-Vingts, Hotel Dieu, and other churches of Paris."

Beneath was a skeleton with these lines:

" De terre suis venu, et en terre retourne,
L'âme rends a toi I.H.S. qui les pechés pardonne."

Of this church, which was destroyed in the Revolution, only the elevated tower remains.

Flamel built great part of the vaulted gallery which surrounded the Cimetière des Innocens, and here the tomb of his wife was placed, which was adorned with elaborate carving of saints and angels, and Latin and French inscriptions.

The deaths of Flamel and his wife were said to have occurred in 1417, but it was currently believed that they did not really die, and that logs of wood were substituted for their bodies, in order to deceive the world. The pair, in reality, continued to live on, for Flamel had made the great discovery of prolonging life, and also of the transmutation of metals. At his *disappearance*, however, from the usual places of his sojourn, strange tokens of his art were discovered in the house where he had resided. The cellars were full of mysteriously formed vases, furnaces, mattresses, and other utensils for the perfection of the great work.

Paul Lucas, the traveller, *who saw the devil*, Asmodeus, in Upper Egypt, declared that he conversed with a dervish who knew both Flamel and Pernelle, and who stated that they were at that time in good health.

The source of Flamel's knowledge appears to

have been derived from a certain book, which he himself has described thus:—

"There fell into my hands, for the sum of two florins, a gilded book, very old and of very great size; it was made neither of paper nor of parchment, like other books, but of the bark, apparently, of young trees, and was bound with leather, curiously wrought with strange characters, written in an unknown, but seemingly an Oriental tongue. The interior was engraved with a sharp-pointed instrument on the bark, and the characters were Latin, beautifully coloured. The book contained three times seven leaves. At the end of the first division was a leaf without any writing, but instead thereof a painting, representing a rod, with serpents swallowing each other up. At the second division was seen a cross, on which a serpent was crucified, and at the end was painted a desert, with many beautiful fountains, from whence issued numerous serpents disporting here and there. On the first leaf was written, in large golden capitals, as follows:—

"Abraham the Jew, Prince, Priest, Levite, Astrologer, and Philosopher. To the Nation of the Jews by the wrath of God dispersed through Gaul, Health."

Then followed often repeated and severe denunciations and maledictions, in which the word "Maranatha" was frequently used against any

who might presume to attempt to read the book, unless he were sacrificer or scribe."

This mysterious book contained the secret of transmutation.

The day on which Nicolas Flamel first accomplished "*projection*" was on Monday, the 17th of June, 1382, about mid-day, in the presence of Pernelle, his wife, when he converted half a pound of mercury into pure silver; and on the 25th of April, at five in the evening, by the operation of the *red stone*, he transmuted mercury into pure gold.

Perhaps it was in some tower formerly existing in the Rue d'Arqueny, or *d'Alchemie*, in Bourges, that the great works for the discovery of the philosopher's stone were supposed to be carried on by Jean Cœur, and subsequently by his son, under the direction of Nicolas Flamel.

The belief of the age in the supernatural is curiously illustrated by the account given by several grave contemporary authors of the apparition in Paris about the middle of the fifteenth century, of a prodigy of learning, the "admirable Crichton" of the day, the history of whose attainments is so marvellous as scarcely to be credible, yet De Coussy, Mezeray, Tritême, and others, assert the truth of the relation boldly.

He is sometimes called Ferrand de Cordube, and said to be a native of Spain, though nothing about him was altogether known as positive ex-

cept his great learning. He professed to be a doctor in theology, and though only twenty years of age, knew by heart all Aristotle, all the books of law, Hippocrates, Galen, and their chief commentators, and could converse in Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Arabic, and Chaldean. He is described as of middling stature, handsome, and of the most agreeable manners: he could sing charmingly, play on every instrument better than any one else, and paint and illuminate in a style superior to any that had yet been seen in Paris. His chronicler sets down his attractions in the manner of Launce when enumerating those of a mistress.

"Item: In respect to war none more expert: and he could play with a two-handed sword so marvellously that none could compare with him; and when he saw his adversary, he failed not to rush upon him twenty or twenty-four steps off in a leap.

"Item: He is a master of arts, master in medicine, doctor of laws, doctor of theology, and truly he disputed with us at the college of Navarre, who were fifty of the most learned clerks of the University of Paris, and with not less than three thousand other clerks, and he so wonderfully well replied to all questions made to him, that it is a veritable marvel to believe to those who have not seen it.

"Item: He is subtle at speaking Greek, Hebrew, Chaldaic, Arabic, and *all other languages.*

"Item: He is a knight at arms; and verily, if a man could live a hundred years without eating, drinking, or sleeping, he could not acquire all the sciences which this man knows by heart; and certainly he caused us all *great fear*, for he took down all the four doctors of the Holy Church."

This latter accomplishment in particular, rather too hardily exhibited, was enough to confirm those learned Thebans in the notion that the stranger could be no other than Anti-Christ, the son of a Christian father and a Jewish mother, and it was reported that he was carried away by the devil at the age of thirty-two.

After he had thus astonished all the *savans* of Paris, this miracle of knowledge departed for Burgundy on his way to Germany, and it was after he had left the city that the most renowned doctors of the university met together to pronounce upon him; but whether their predictions were verified, or not, was never made manifest to the world. Certain it is, that the wonderful young man was never after heard of.

Du Clercq, in his Memoires, gives another instance of similar credulity.

The constable Saint Pol, condemned to be beheaded in the square of the Hôtel de Ville in Paris, distributed before his execution to his four confessors sixty-six half crowns of gold which he had about him, and begged that they might be distributed for the good of his soul; then taking

21276

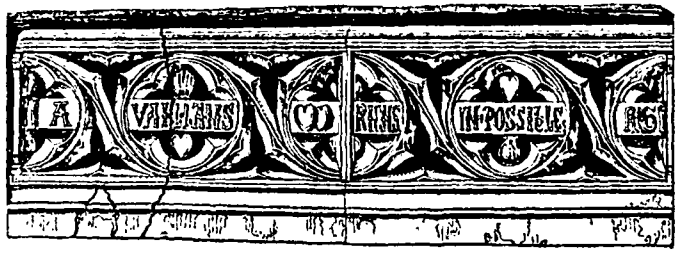
from his finger a little ring, enriched with a diamond, he placed it on the finger of one of the ecclesiastics, desiring that it should be presented to the image of Notre Dame; finally saying to the Cordelier Jean de Sordun, "Good father, you see here a stone which I have long worn round my neck, and have loved much, for it has great virtue, and can resist all poison, and preserve from all pestilence; the which stone I beg you to bear from me to my grandson, to whom you will say that I request him to keep it for my sake."

After his death the four confessors, being interrogated, declared these last commands of the constable; on which my lord chancellor replied, that with regard to the crowns of gold and the diamond, they are at liberty to use them as had been directed, but as for the said stone, it must be delivered to the king, to do his good pleasure with.

This belief in the power of obtaining supernatural wealth was not confined to the century in which Jacques Cœur was born: scarcely a person existed who had risen from comparative poverty to affluence on whom the suspicion of unlawful knowledge did not fall, both at that time and up to a comparatively recent period. The elixir possessed by Jacques Cœur was probably one, not of easy but of possible attainment to perseverance, industry, genius, and good fortune. There are

never wanting persons ready and willing to depreciate a great man, either during his success, which excites envy, or on his downfall, when his friends fall off, and the world is disposed to listen to circumstances which bring him down to an ordinary level.

There appears to be no doubt that Jacques Cœur, at all events, by the time he had reached manhood, was in the possession of a large fortune, and was a merchant of great importance. He was married to a woman of good family, named Macée de Léodepart, the daughter of the provost of Bourges, who was in the household of Jean, Duke de Berri, called the Magnificent. The brother of Jacques was a canon in the Sainte Chapelle of Bourges, and afterwards became Bishop of Luçon.



CHAPTER X.

DAMASCUS.—BLADES.—GREEK FIRE.—MOORISH SECRECY.—TRADE WITH THE EAST.—LOW ESTEEM OF TRADERS.—HOUSE OF JACQUES CŒUR.

THE great and patriotic object of Jacques Cœur was to elevate the commerce of France, which, at the period at which he lived, was exceedingly behind that of other nations. He made many voyages in Italy and in the East, and succeeding in establishing extensive relations with merchants there. Venice, Genoa, Pisa, and Florence had hitherto monopolised all the commerce of the Mediterranean; Barcelona also flourished, and had great dealings with Damascus; but the ports of France were empty of vessels, and in a languishing condition. In a short time, by his energy and genius, the merchant of Bourges changed this state of things, and, visiting in person countries whose negotiations he desired to attract, he gained his object and attained the noble end he sought.

Bertrandon de la Brocquière, counsellor and

first esquire, carver to Philippe le Bon, Duke of Burgundy, travelled to Palestine in the year 1433, and relates, amongst his numerous adventures, the circumstance of his having met Jacques Cœur, in these words:

"I found there* many Genoese, Venetian, Calabrian, Florentine and French merchants. The last were come thither to purchase several articles, and particularly spiceries, with the intention of taking them to Baruth (Beyrout), and embarking them on board the galley expected from Narbonne. Among them was Jacques Cœur, who has since acted a great part in France, and was argentier to the king. He told us that the galley was then at Alexandria, and that probably Sir Andrew (de Toulongeon) and his three companions (Pierre de Vaudrei, Geoffroi de Toisi and Jean de la Roc, who had accompanied de la Brocquière, and meant to return home by sea,) would embark on board at Baruth."

In speaking of Damascus he says: "There is a khan in the town, appropriated as a deposit and place of safety to merchants and their goods. It is called Khan Berkot, from its having been originally the residence of a person of that name. For my part, I believe that Berkot was a Frenchman; and what inclines me to this opinion is, that on a stone of the

* In Damascus.

house are carved fleurs-de-lis, which appear as ancient as the walls."

It is not, perhaps, unreasonable to conclude that this stone may have been erected by one of the factors of Jacques Cœur who traded at Damascus, if not by himself.

The chief commodity for which trade was carried on was for spices, although Damascus blades, furs, and many other valuables formed part of the commerce.

La Brocquière gives a particular description of the Damascus blades, "the best throughout Syria."

"It is," says he, "a curious thing to see how they polish them. An operation is performed before it is tempered: they have for the purpose a little bit of wood, in which an iron is enclosed; this is passed over the blade to remove irregularities, the same as with a plane those of wood are removed; the steel is then tempered and then polished, which polish is so fine, that when a man would arrange his turban, the sword serves for a mirror. As for the temper, it is so perfect that no where have I seen swords that cut so well.

"At Damascus also are made mirrors of steel which enlarge objects like a burning glass. I have seen some which, when exposed to the sun, pierced a plank at fifteen or sixteen feet distance, and set it on fire."

No doubt Jacques Cœur, with a mind so inquiring, took care to make himself familiar with all the secrets of the land which, as the voyager says, can be bought for money; and if the Burgundian provided himself with such knowledge as he recounts, the French merchant was not behind hand in securing the same advantages to his country.

One of the sons of Jacques Cœur was married to a daughter of Jean Bureau, baron of Montglat, grand master of the artillery of France; who, with Gaspard Bureau, his brother, particularly distinguished himself in the wars against the English, and more especially at the recovery of Normandy and Guienne. There is good reason to think that whatever valuable information Jacques Cœur could impart, would not be withheld from so near a connexion; and it is very likely that some of the dangerous objects named by La Brocquière were made known by him to the master of the king's artillery.

The following is the account given by the traveller of what he witnessed "amongst the Moors," of rocket-practice, probably Greek fire.

"The galley arrived from Alexandria two or three days afterward; but, during this short interval, we witnessed a feast celebrated by the Moors in their ancient manner. It began in the evening at sunset. Numerous companies, scattered here and there, were singing and uttering

loud cries. While this was passing, the cannon of the castle were fired, and the people of the town launched into the air, 'bien hault et bien loing, une manière de feu plus gros que le plus gros fallot que je veisse oncques allumé.' They told me they sometimes made use of such at sea, to set fire to the sails of an enemy's vessel. It seems to me that, as it is a thing easy to be made, and of little expense, it may be equally well employed to burn a camp or a thatched village, or in an engagement with cavalry to frighten the horses. Curious to know its composition, I sent the servant of my host to the person who made this fire, and requested him to teach me the method. He returned for answer that he dared not, for that he should run great danger were it known; but as there is nothing a Moor will not do for money, I offered him a ducat, which quieted his fears, and he taught me all he knew, and even gave me the moulds in wood and other ingredients, which I have brought to France."

At the commencement of the hostilities which preceded the conquest of Normandy by Charles VII., Mathieu de Coussy mentions the assault of the town of Pont-Eau-de-Mer, which, after a vigorous resistance, was taken at last by the French, "en partie par le moyen du feu que les François avoient jeté dedans."

This was very likely some of those rockets

which De la Brocquière mentions, and which Jacques Cœur had no doubt introduced.

The observations made by Jacques Cœur of men and things, the rapidity of his conceptions, and correctness of his calculations, led him on in the way of success with unerring truth, so that he was soon able to execute a plan he had formed for the good of France, that of establishing the trade of Marseilles, which city was almost ruined in consequence of the unfortunate contentions of the house of Anjou, to recover the kingdom of Naples. He made Montpellier the centre of his operations, and from thence he directed his expeditions. So happy were his ventures that he was soon able to arm and equip ten or twelve vessels, which he dispatched to the Levant, and which carried on an uninterrupted trade with Egypt. Every year his power and wealth increased, and the merchants of Italy, who had hitherto been without a rival, beheld with jealousy and amazement the rapid strides he had made to fortune, and the prosperity which, through his means, was pouring into the ports of France.

His credit, in the mean time, in Egypt was immense: his agents were received with the highest respect and consideration: they were men well chosen and trustworthy, and in the end proved themselves as devoted to their employer in the day of his reverses as they were earnest in his cause during his success. Noble, just, and liberal,

he obtained the admiration and confidence of all those with whom he had dealings; and his influence with the soldan of Egypt, on more than one occasion, was exerted in favour of his rivals, who had offended by their rapacity and want of faith. Christian traders appear, indeed, to have been held in very low esteem.

"They are," says La Brocquière, "only looked upon at Damascus with hatred. Every evening the merchants are shut up in their houses by persons appointed for this purpose, and the next day the doors are again opened as they see good."

The traveller who relates this himself experienced the inconvenience of being considered as belonging to those Christian cities whose bad faith had gained them so evil a reputation. He was believed to be a Venetian, and was thrown into prison, from which he was only released by proclaiming himself a native of France, without specifying that he was of Burgundy.

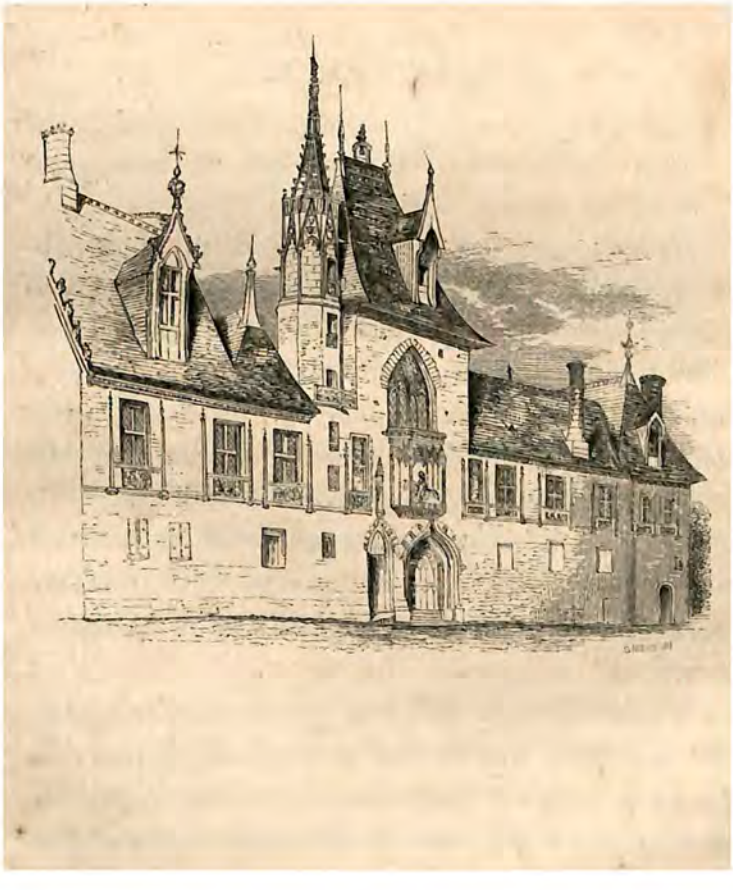
The influence of Jacques Cœur is proved by this circumstance, for doubtless it was his probity and good management that had caused the French character to be so highly esteemed above that of other nations. He is known to have frequently exerted his influence with the soldan to obtain a mitigation of various rigorous sentences, particularly in the case of the Venetians, whom the sovereign had driven from his dominions in the year 1442, having confiscated their property

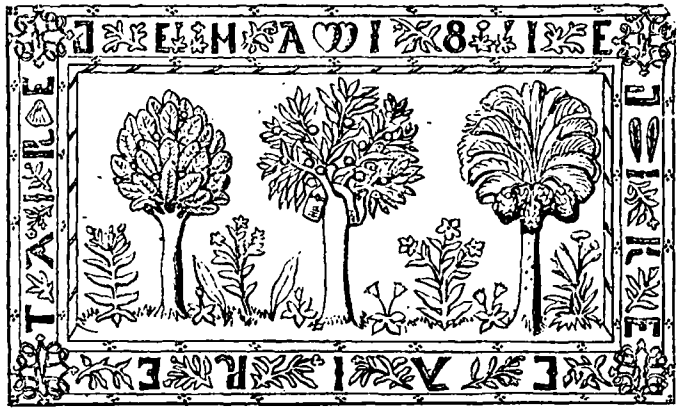
in consequence of wrongs of which his subjects had to complain.

In the course of twenty years Jacques Cœur had more commercial power than all the rest of the merchants of the Mediterranean put together. Three hundred of his agents resided at the different ports, not only of Europe, but of the East, and in all the nations contiguous to France. Everywhere his vessels were respected, as though he had been a sovereign prince; they covered the seas wherever commerce was to be cultivated, and from farthest Asia they brought back cloths of gold and silk, furs, arms, spices, and ingots of gold and silver, still swelling his mighty stores, and filling Europe with surprise at his adventurous daring, and his unparalleled perseverance. Like his great prototype, Cosmo de Medici, who, from a simple merchant, became a supreme ruler, Jacques Cœur, the Medicis of Bourges, became illustrious and wealthy, and sailed long in the favourable breeze of fortune, admired, envied, feared, and courted by all.

His wealth gave rise to a proverb, long retained by the citizens of his native town: "As rich as Jacques Cœur," expressed all that could be conceived of prosperity and success. Popular tradition asserts, that, so great was the profusion of the precious metals that he possessed, that his horses were *shod with silver;* a common reputation, even at the present day, enjoyed by persons

of singular wealth. The adornment of Bourges, where he was born, was not one of the least projects of the great merchant, and having, with a large sum, purchased a considerable tract of land in the town, he began, in 1443, to build that magnificent mansion which still remains a noble relic of his taste and wealth.





CHAPTER XI.

HOUSE OF JACQUES CŒUR DESCRIBED.—CHAPEL.—SECRET CHAMBERS. — MYSTERY. —VAULTS. — ROOFS. — FURNITURE OF THE PERIOD.

It was with the intention of erecting a mansion for his family that Jacques Cœur bought of Jacques Belin, for the sum of one thousand two hundred *old crowns*, that is sixty-four to the *marc*, the fief of La Chaussée, then a tower situated in the court of the Hôtel de Limoges. He then built the tower which looks towards the Place Berry, and between these two towers was erected the main body of the hôtel. The whole erection cost him one hundred and thirty-five thousand livres.

The plan of the building is extremely irregular, for the space was somewhat confined, on one side being hemmed in by the ancient Roman ramparts, and on the other, by the wooden houses of the

town. The two façades of the mansion were in different characters; that on the rampart side being somewhat fortified, three towers being erected here at unequal distances, and of different forms. One only is ornamented by a balustrade, the others are now of various heights, and present nothing imposing to the eye.

From the street the house has entirely a peaceable aspect; it is of stone, and has nothing to indicate defence. On one side there is a pavilion flanked by a small tower, surmounted by ornamental carving in the *flamboyant* style.

Between these runs a balcony, with a rich open balustrade, in which may be read the remarkable sentence constantly repeated in different parts of the house,

"A baillants coeurs rien impossible."

On each side of this beautiful balcony are two false windows, half open, from each of which a figure in stone, one male the other female, as large as life, is seen bending forward, as if looking into the street on the watch. These figures have been puzzling to most persons to explain: popular tradition calls them Jean de Village the faithful factor, and his wife, the niece of Jacques Cœur.

In the central pavilion is a beautiful chapel of singularly small dimensions, where there scarcely appears room for the merchant, his wife, and his children to have been assembled. No doubt,

therefore, the other members of his household were placed in an adjoining gallery.

There is a fine twisted stair-case leading to this chapel, which is, in itself, one of the most exquisite pieces of ornamented architecture imaginable. The ceiling is covered with frescoes of such extreme beauty and finish, that they are worthy of the pencil of Hemling, or Jean de Bruges. They represent angels in white robes, on a vivid blue* ground of great intensity, covered with scattered stars of gold, still shining in the greatest purity. The stars are in relief and the gold as bright as if newly applied. The figures are most gracefully drawn, and the draperies are bold and grand; but nothing can surpass the beauty of the heads, which really give an idea of heavenly attractions; all are varied, and the attitude of each is of singular and admirable grace. These lovely beings hold banderoles, which sweep from one to the other in a thousand curves, and they are inscribed with sentences from scripture. To this oratory the master of the house and his wife had access from their own apartments. There is a fire-place, and a fine window still retaining a portion of beautiful painted glass. No doubt it was fitted up with every attention to comfort, as much as any tribune in a modern private chapel.

* The offer of a large sum of money was made by an artist to the authorities for the fine ultramarine of this ceiling, but fortunately it was rejected.

Instead of priests and choristers, the frequenters of the beautiful place are now clerks and scriveners, and the visitor who wishes to explore it disturbs half a dozen functionaries from their occupations, for it is divided into several portions connected with the mairie.

From the chapel, on each side, both towards the street and the court yard, project niches or tribunes, once exquisitely ornamented, although a good deal of the sculptured foliage is now destroyed, and unfortunately the figures for which they were erected are gone. One was an equestrian statue of Charles VII. armed at all points; and the other was Jacques Cœur, mounted on a mule, whose feet were *shod the wrong way*. This mystery has never been explained, like many others in the house.

This beautiful specimen of art in the middle ages, even in its present state, is most admirable and valuable; the ignorance of the Revolutionists, who could not distinguish friend from foe, and directed their vengeance as much against one as the other, caused these two fine statues to be destroyed; and the tribunes where they stood are now void. There is something similar on the façade of the palace of Blois, where the figures of Louis XII. and Anne of Brittany appear in a projecting niche over the grand entrance.

The house, even in its present state, is justly considered one of the most remarkable speci-

mens of the style of that age, exhibited in private dwellings; it was constructed, in some measure, on the plan of those which the proprietor had observed and admired in Venice and the East; but there is an originality altogether peculiar in the building, which makes it stand alone as a work of art, worthy of the admiration of Europe. Although time and neglect and modern repair have dealt hardly with this beautiful structure, there is enough remaining to excite the highest interest and admiration, and to make the desolate old town of Bourges worthy of being a place of pilgrimage to the traveller of taste.

After passing through the principal entrance towards the street by a vaulted porte-cochère, with a low door at the side which conducts to the chapel tower, a spacious court-yard is entered, round which stand the buildings which compose the mansion, every part of which is so elaborately finished, that it requires much time and attention to do justice to the beautiful details. The chief entrance tower, of an octagon form, is encrusted with stone pictures, exquisitely executed, of orange, palm, and cocoa-nut trees, to indicate the merchant's trade in eastern lands: and on the ground between these trees are certain flowers, probably first introduced by him into France. Over every door is a representation of some scene indicative of the use to which the chamber was

put to which it led; for instance, that over the kitchen entrance represents a scene of cooking. Under many of the finely decorated windows are similar ornaments, all in the best style of art.

The chief device of Jacques Cœur occurs constantly in every part of the building, together with many others, secret and mysterious and unexplained. On many of the walls and windows may even now be read, not only the celebrated motto which the persevering merchant had adopted,

"A vaillants cœurs rien impossible,"

but that of "faire, dire, taire," is frequently met with, and that of "taire" repeated alone. Another, expressive of some knowledge kept from vulgar view, is "en bouche close n'entre mouche;" sometimes the words "taire de ma joie" are introduced amidst figures of hearts and cockle-shells, to express Jacques, the pilgrim or voyager, and Cœur. Like the famous E. S., and all the mottoes of the Countess of Shrewsbury, at Hardwick Hall in Derbyshire, which are introduced in painting and in stone from the high parapet to the basement of her fine dwelling, so do the hearts and shells of Jacques Cœur appear scattered all over his house, speaking eternally of the architect of his own fortune. In one of the stone compartments still remaining, he appears in a rich garb covered with hearts and shells, accompanied by his lady in a habit of ceremony; he holds in one hand a mason's hammer, and presents to his wife a bouquet with the other. This is seen over the grand tower staircase, where there are ten other figures in a kind of frame of stone.

Over the door of the chapel are four bas-reliefs of figures, representing priests and choristers and beggars asking alms, mass being performed, and a lady and attendants proceeding to prayers with their books, a child opening the chapel door for them, having his finger on his lip to enjoin silence, and over another door is an Adoration with holy personages and angels.

Then come orange and olive trees, roses and wreaths, and mottoes in profusion, with grotesque figures, having asses' ears and grinning faces and heads, crowned with a fool's cap.

There was no want of private ways in this remarkable dwelling.

One in particular is so mysterious in its character, that it deserves especial mention: none of the bas-reliefs which adorned this, a secret chamber leading from the study of the merchant, are, unfortunately, now in existence, but drawings remain of them very curious and interesting. They seem to tell so extraordinary a tale, that a curious theory might be founded upon them. If Jacques Cœur possessed a secret of great importance, he evidently found it impossible to conceal it within his own breast, and has sculptured it on his walls in a manner to excite the most intense curiosity, without satisfying the inquirer. Who the characters are whom he has depicted, it is impossible to do more than guess at; they stand thus:—

A figure in the dress in which Jacques Cœur is usually represented, that is, in a furred gown and chain, and wearing a headdress of a turban shape with long ends, is cautiously, but with rapid steps, approaching a tree, whether a *seurelle** or not, it is not easy to determine; a lady is reclining beneath this tree, and she looks towards

* The device of Agnes Sorel.

him as if in expectation. Her hand is raised to her head, apparently to remove a crown which she wears. Not far off, but placed a little in the back ground, is another tree, peeping through the branches of which appears a crowned and bearded head, and above a banderole, the inscription on which is effaced; this face is full of surprise and anxiety, and is reflected in a fountain at the foot of the tree. At the opposite extremity of the bas-relief, which appears to have run round the chamber continuously, is a third tree, behind which is seen a fool, with bauble, cap, and bells; his finger is placed on his grinning mouth, and he seems looking on and enjoying the scene before him. In the borders, which make a sort of frame to the picture, are the usual favourite mottoes of "dire, faire, taire," and "en bouche close n'entre mouche."

It is not impossible that this sculpture was executed after Jacques Cœur's memory was re-established, and perhaps at the same time as those two strange figures in the windows looking over the street; if so, the statue, on the mule shod the wrong way, of the argentier himself, may also have replaced another; but yet there appears every reason to suppose that all these inexplicable sculptures were erected in the life-time of the first master.

However, as a great many papers and parchments, formerly in the hôtel, have been destroyed

and cast into corners, the real explanation of the riddle is not likely to come to light, unless some very active researches are entered into, a circumstance much to be desired.

The fool in this sculptured enigma holds his bauble in one hand, and with the other is trying to catch flies which are running up a tree, on which a bird is quietly seated.

Jacques Cœur appears in full costume, his surcoat bordered with minever, and his dagger by his side; he points with one hand to a fountain at the foot of an oak tree, where is seen reflected the crowned head which appears above amongst the branches. The reclining female figure is in a court costume, and in a very negligent attitude. The collar or necklace she wears is covered with magnificent jewels of great richness. The scene seems to pass in a wood or garden, for there are several trees and a profusion of flowers on the ground.

The air of secret meaning given to the argentier, the anxious expression of the crowned head in the tree, and the jester's scoffing and sinister smile, all excite the most intense curiosity and interest.

This mysterious chamber is on the third story of the largest tower, originally Roman, as its first story indicates by the remains of Roman brick it exhibits; Jacques Cœur himself built up the remainder, which is singularly irregular;

and here he established his own private cabinet, which is that containing the singular sculpture described, and which is called the Salle du Trésor.

The door has a frame work of iron of great thickness, covered with plates of the same metal, contrived with great art to close over each other: on this is a secret lock of the most complicated construction; the hinges of the door were concealed, so that if the key of this extraordinary lock were by chance left inside when the door was closed, there would be no way of entrance but by demolishing the wall of the room.

The corbels which support the mouldings of the arches of the ceiling, represent angels holding, one a scroll, others a guitar, a shield, and a sort of lantern. The arms of the master are also there. This hall is lighted by two windows divided into two parts, one of these has a stone seat in the embrasure, formed out of the thickness of the wall; and there is a simple fire-place between the two; opposite this formerly stood an immensely large press, unfortunately destroyed to give place to one more convenient for the papers kept here. The flooring of this room is formed of several large squares of stone, but where this press stood, the pavement was simply laid in ranges, which seems to prove that this piece of furniture was there from the time of the construction of the chamber.

It was behind this press, on its removal, that the sculpture, which throws so mysterious an interest over this part of the building, was found.

That part which has been preserved is a kind of corbel, and is in very high relief, detached, as it were, from the wall in a most surprising manner; part of one of the trees is broken, as well as the lady's crown, and the lower part had been cut so as to admit the press described.

More of these picture-secrets might have existed, and might have served to explain the rest; but these are all that are known, and they tell nothing. Could they relate to some secret attachment between the friend of Charles VII. and the beautiful Agnes? or between the adventurous merchant and the Queen herself? Yet

why be so incautious, if it were so, as to engrave the dangerous truth on walls? fine giving them tongues, as well as their fabled ones. Was it safe to stamp a record of infidelity where it might be seen by an injured wife or a jealous master? or was it the story of his royal friend, and not his own? Time has refused to solve the mystery, and one it must remain to the end.

There are extensive vaults beneath the building, to which all sorts of strange conjectures attach; they are said to afford a subterranean way from Bourges as far as Sancerre, and tradition affirms, that the wine produced from his vines were conveyed by conduits into the cellars of Jacques Cœur by this route.* It was long believed that these cellars contained huge chests of treasure, and that other hoards were also to be found in a chamber, closed in by massive iron doors, where some antique coffers were, till lately, to be seen.

The summits of each of the towers of the house have stone figures holding iron lances, an arrangement likely to have attracted the lightning, but singularly enough, only one of the figures has ever been cast down in a storm, and the lightning has passed by harmless.

Every chimney is exquisitely ornamented with foliage and flowers; and the edges of the roof are

* Perhaps Rabelais alludes to this in his distich in praise of wine, "Ainsi se fit Jacques Cœur riche."

finished with as much care as if close to the eye; the heart and shell alternating in compartments all along the line of roof.

The gargouilles projecting from beneath the balconies, are all of grotesque forms, representing apes chained, one having a child in its arms, which has given rise to a tradition that such an animal had escaped from a window, carrying the infant son of the argentier with him, who was with difficulty rescued from his perilous position.

The very roofs of this curious house are covered with sculpture, and open lacework parapets bear the favourite mottoes; every pipe and gargouille is wrought and ornamented, every chimney wreathed and decorated, every window surrounded with devices: but the most remarkable and entire of the statues which remain, are the two figures in stone already named, placed in the outer balconies of the chief entrance next the street.

There is now but little left of the once splendid decorations of the interior of the edifice: when the house was converted into a place of public business, the fine chambers were cut up into compartments, without regard to taste or judgment, as an instance of which, one of the magnificent chimney-pieces, a model of art, was jammed into a corner, and a wall run up dividing it in half, so as to allow of two rooms being made out of the large hall in which it stood; and

finally it was demolished altogether. This chimney was, originally, eighteen French feet wide, and six and a half high beneath the mantel-piece; the pannels and pilasters, capitals and groups which adorned it were superb; angels, birds, flowers, and fruits, animals and human figures, were carved in the fine marble, and all exquisitely delineated; they appear to have been painted of the richest colours, and the ground overlaid with gold, and the effect of the whole must have been gorgeous in the extreme.

Fluted pilasters sustained the chimney-piece, the capitals of which are of great beauty, the flowers, fruits, and insects forming them being done to the life. One part of the ornament represents fortifications, and there are projecting towers, surmounted with battlements; the centre one appears to offer an entrance, and there are openings in the walls which connect the towers, through which groups of small figures are seen. Beyond the walls appear houses, the roofs of which reach to the ceiling of the room, for this extraordinary work occupied almost the whole of one extremity of the hall.

On opposite sides of the fire-place Adam and Eve are represented, each seated beneath a tree covered with red fruit, the leaves being painted green; the serpent is not forgotten, and an angel in high relief, with wings displayed, the bust resting on a cloud, hovers near a scroll,

by which, on a blue ground, stands a vase bearing a lily.

The magnificent chimney described is no longer to be seen, but it had often been drawn, and a clever artist of Bourges has presented it in its entire state in his engraving; a few fragments of the gigantic and unique structure alone have survived the wreck of the fine chamber which it adorned; but there is still one chimney-piece remaining almost as beautiful as the grand one in the dining-hall, and affording a perfect idea of the effect of the larger one. Its form is also that of a castle, and there are numerous figures in different attitudes looking from each battlement, some are directing their arrows at assailants, some are casting down stones, some blowing trumpets, others holding flags, while some are drinking and looking on. All are of excellent execution, and the friezes and *colonnettes*, with their capitals, are delicate in the extreme.

This beautiful work of art, worthy of Adam Kraft, has been treated with great contempt; it is cut in two at the upper extremity by a ceiling, and the remainder of the chimney-piece appears from the floor of the room above!

The fine dining chamber seems, of all the rooms in the house, to have been the most splendid, and, on the whole, it has not suffered so much as many others; being required for the sittings of the court of assizes, its original dimen-

sions have been preserved. At one extremity there is still a gallery half way towards the ceiling, destined for the musicians who played during the repast.

About the middle of the room is a square stone which covers the entrance to a cellar or cave, no doubt used for the purpose of concealing at a moment's notice, jewels, money, or any precious possession which it might be necessary to hide; beneath it another is said to exist, but it is now filled up.

When this fine chamber was adorned with rich tapestry, filled with carved chairs, and benches, and coffers, with velvet cushions and draperies, and gilded leather, having a gorgeous buffet laden with elaborately carved plate of gold and silver, and glittering with lights held by attendants in "*guarded*" liveries, the roof resounding with the sound of harps and the song of minstrels, it must have presented an aspect of extraordinary pomp and magnificence: and here, doubtless, the king of Bourges and his heroes often feasted, and the fair Agnes heard her praises sung.

None of the windows of this edifice are in a line, a circumstance frequently observable in houses and castles of this period: but here this peculiarity is evidently the effect of design, as it appears to have been the wish of the architect to create surprises and contrasts of every kind, wherever he had an opportunity of doing so.

The doors are all of different heights, and some extremely low and narrow; so that in one or two instances there seems scarcely room for two persons to enter at the same time.

One of the three doors of entrance leads by a long vaulted passage to the place Berry from the court: the passage inclines considerably, and is very dark and narrow.

The modern oaken doors of the chief entrance, well imitated from the old, are studded with nails, all in the form of hearts: the original doors still, however, exist, and the wood of which they are made is finely sculptured, far beyond the modern workmanship which supplies them, although it is a sufficiently faithful copy. They are carved in an open pattern, with endless hearts and shells, and an exquisitely graceful centre-piece. In one of the folds of these doors is a wicket with a beautifully carved iron grating and a knocker, worked with extreme delicacy. There are still several fragments and squares of coloured glass left, the most curious of which are the following:—

The square is surrounded by a wreathed scroll, on which the favourite motto, "A vaillants cœurs rien impossible," is inscribed, as well as the words "faire, taire, dire, de ma joie." The shield of Jacques Cœur, with its hearts and shells, is encompassed by a garland of hearts and feathers and orange branches with their flowers, all

in various colours; and above are figures, on each side of a column, one representing a personage in a jester's habit, wearing a green dress and a yellow hood with large ears; the mouth of the figure is closed by a padlock, to which the hand points, and round a scroll which curls near is read the legend, "En bouche close n'entre mouche." The fool holds a bauble surmounted by a goat's head. Behind him appears part of a door.

The other figure is in blue, with a red collar turned down, and he has also a hood with large ass's ears; behind him is a branch of orange tree with two oranges, and part of the panel of a wall. This figure has his left hand placed on his breast, and in his right he holds a scroll on which the word "Taire" appears, and in its other fold is seen "E. S." and "Toi."

In the first letter of the word "Dire" a profile which seems feminine is introduced, and in an "O" occurs the same.

The arms are contrary to the rules of heraldry, —colour on colour, and metal on metal; but this was probably to suit the effect of the glass painting.

Another square is damasked all over the ground which bears the shield, and is surrounded by feathers and hearts in a graceful garland; below are white flowers with yellow leaves, and in one compartment a Cupid is lying playing on the

trumpet; on each side stands a wand, surmounted by two feathers, red and blue, which enclose a golden shell; round each wand is twisted a scroll bearing the inscription "Dire, faire de mayme."

These mottoes and devices may, perhaps, allude to the alchemical knowledge of Jacques Cœur: the feathers may typify the famous eastern bird spoken of by the poets of Persia and Arabia, as having a mysterious existence, only known to adepts in science; and the flowers were probably brought by the merchant from far climes, and then first introduced into France. The oranges, no doubt, are emblematic of his traffic in climates where they grew, and there is little doubt that he was the means of making them well known in the south of France.

This superb abode of the great merchant now belongs to the town of Bourges as the Mairie.

On the 8th of October, 1501, Jacques Cœur, the grandson of the argentier, sold the fief and the Hôtel de la Chaussée to Antoine Turpin, Sieur de Nozay, for the sum of 15,000 livres, and *fifteen ells of black velvet, and fourteen ells of camelot:* a curious circumstance, demonstrative of the value of such merchandise at the period, but somewhat laughable, according to modern notions, in an agreement for the price of a domicile.

In 1538 François Chambellan, commissioner

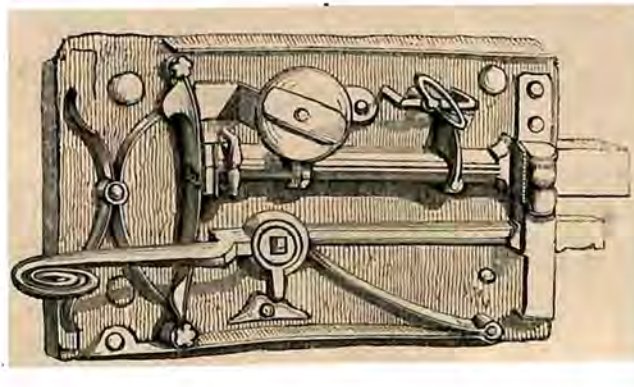
of war, came into possession of the mansion, in right of Claude Turpin, his wife.

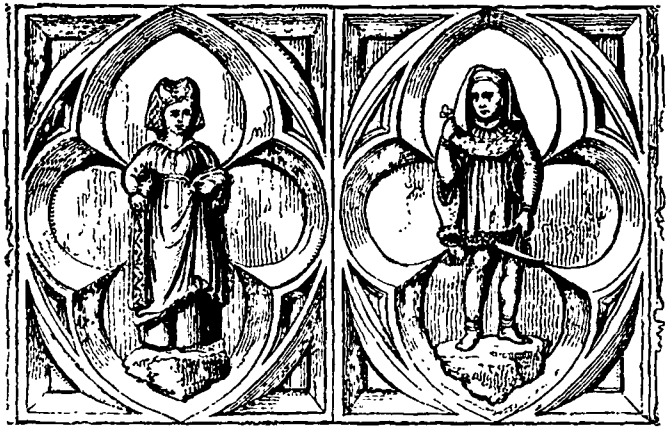
Claude de l'Aubépine, secretary of state, acquired it in December, 1552, from François Chambellan, Sieur de la Garonne, and Jean de Sauzay, Sieur de Moulet. It was sold by a decree passed on Charles de l'Aubépine, Marquis de Châteauneuf, and adjudged, the 13th of May, 1679, to Jean Baptiste Colbert, minister of state, who granted it in January, 1682, to, the mayor and sheriffs of Bourges. It was accepted the 22nd of the following February, in a general assembly of the inhabitants, on the condition of paying a golden crown annually to the marquisate of Châteauneuf, and to furnish the lord of Châteauneuf every four years, when the mayor of Bourges was changed, a silver medal worth ten livres, on one of the sides of which should be the arms of the Marquis de Châteauneuf, and on the other those of the town of Bourges, with an inscription of the names of the lord of Châteauneuf and the mayor of Bourges, and, besides this, a premium of 33,000 livres.*

* The remarks of M. Michelet on the subject of Jacques Cœur and his house are so much in accord with the impression produced on my own mind by the latter, however I may venture to differ with him in some points respecting the former, that I feel unwilling to withhold them from the reader in the original, the style of M. Michelet being too characteristic to permit of the same spirit being conveyed in any translation.—*See Appendix.*

Although the art of gardening had not arrived at great perfection in the fifteenth century, the rich merchant, whose frequent visits to the East had familiarised him with the rose gardens of Damascus, no doubt did all that the knowledge of his time allowed to embellish his fine domicile with all the skill that could be procured in this department.

When the ancient defences of the town were destroyed, and the ditches filled up, the argentier caused a part of the ground attached to his newly erected mansion to be formed into a garden. Where it once bloomed is now the place called De Berry: it would be more appropriately named Place de l'Argentier, as the market square before the house is still called Place de Jacques Cœur.





CHAPTER XII.

FURNITURE OF THE PERIOD.—HOUSE AT MONTPELLIER.—THE LODGE.—BUREAU OF THE TREASURY.—ROYAL GRATITUDE.—NECROMANCY.

Not only was the furniture at this period, and for many years before, of extreme richness, and exhibiting the most refined taste, but the ceilings of rooms were ornamented with sculpture of the most elaborate beauty. They were often made of Irish oak, and the walls of the apartments were of the same material, costly and durable.

It was also the custom to have small, portable staircases, which may explain the mystery which frequently suggests itself in the ruins of feudal castles, where, except certain towers and chambers, all the rooms appear inaccessible, as no vestiges of staircases remain. These were of wood, in the form of a tower, sometimes extremely delicate.

Monteil speaks of one not more than three feet in diameter, as being worked in the most exquisite manner, and perfectly transparent, with sculptured forms of the smallest and most fairy-like workmanship.

The bedsteads, chairs, benches, all were adorned with similar sculpture, and this minute style was called *menuiserie de la petite cognée.* It was, however, except in state rooms or on state occasions, the custom to use coffers as seats; probably the chairs belonged more particularly to the ladies, for whom these coffers must have offered no very comfortable resting-places.

In the account of expenses in the palace of Charles VI. coffers are mentioned as being of wood, covered with leather, and closed with several locks: these were destined to hold the robes of the lord or lady of the mansion; they were lined with cloth, and adorned with brass nails in devices. Sometimes the leather coverings were coloured very richly; and the effect must have been good, when they were ranged along the walls on occasion of a numerous assembly.

In his superb abode at Bourges Jacques Cœur doubtless lived in all the splendour which his great riches and the magnificent tastes which he was able to indulge warranted. It is said that no utensil used in his house was of inferior metal to silver, and that the display of his plate on even ordinary occasions was almost incredibly

grand. This was one of the circumstances cited against him in his reverse of fortune, although it was, considering his extensive means, openly accounted for as the produce of many years' successful trading, by no means extraordinary in the richest subject in France, able to purchase back a kingdom for his sovereign.

Of the house of the great merchant at Montpellier, which was probably equally magnificent with that of Bourges, there is nothing now remaining. It is described by Borel as very curious, and bore the name of "La Loge," by which it would seem probable that Jacques Cœur belonged to the fraternity of Freemasons; indeed, his being represented on the friezes of his house with a trowel in his hand gives indication of the fact. It is thus that the historian of the "Antiquités Gauloises" mentions the residence alluded to:—

"With respect to 'La Loge' at Montpellier, which he built, three portals may there be seen in the form of *furnaces*, similar to those of Nicolas Flamel. On one there is on one side a sun all over fleurs-de-lis, and on the other a full moon, also covered with fleurs-de-lis, and surrounded by a hedge or crown, as it were, of thorns, which seems to denote the solar and lunar stone arrived at perfection.

"On another portal is seen, on one side a fruit tree with branches of roses at its foot, and on

the tree the arms of Jacques Cœur; on the other there is an escutcheon, and within it what would appear to present the chymic character of the sun.

"On the third portal, which is in the midst, there is, on one side, a stag bearing a banner, and having a collar of fleurs-de-lis, environed with a branch of a tree, which represents Mercury, or the philosophical matter, which at the commencement is volatile and light as in the stag; on the other side is a shield of France, supported by two griffins.

"All this is enriched by colours and inscriptions, which must be seen in order to explain them.

"Adjoining the Lodge is a house which likewise belonged to Jacques Cœur, where may be seen on the outside of the wall a winged figure without a head, which, in consequence of the largeness of the neck, appears as if it had supported two, and might thus have represented the *androgyne* of philosophers. There are ermines in the left hand of this figure, to indicate its dignity."

I cannot agree with a modern author, who altogether repudiates the idea of these sculptures representing symbolical figures of the *great work*, because the search for the philosopher's stone was a mania of the time, and I think it by no means unreasonable that Borel should thus interpret them. There was considerable affinity,

too, between the seekers after the great secret and the associated brothers of the masonic art. Mystery was at this period the very keystone of all knowledge, and every sort of ingenuity was employed to make that which was clear as dim as possible, and that which was difficult more so. The great power possessed by Jacques Cœur in the East was, doubtless, assisted by the reputation he enjoyed of superior knowledge, and his character as an adept and a mason would, of course, greatly facilitate his designs.

His house at Montpellier was certainly the chief dépôt of his merchandise, and from the large platform which extended along the top of the building he was accustomed to watch the arrival of his vessels from the Levant, which discharged their cargoes at the port of Lates, for from that height the wide sea could be plainly surveyed by the expectant merchant.

In 1737 the façade of the house next to "La Loge" was still standing, and was the bureau of the treasurers of France. It was built of the same stone, and was in the same taste as the Lodge itself.

A benefactor wherever he appeared, Jacques Cœur was particularly so to the town of Montpellier, which, through his care and at his expense, was plentifully supplied with good water. To this end he caused search to be made on the

neighbouring hills for all the springs that might exist there, had them all collected into a solid reservoir, from whence the waters issued into a wide canal, in order to be conveyed into the Font Putanelle,* in the town. The arms of Jacques Cœur, says Aigrefeuille, in his "History," similar to those on the walls of La Loge, may still be seen on the fountain; they are what is called "*parlantes;*" "savoir, trois cœurs, deux et un, à la face chargée de trois coquilles."

The water thus supplied is so abundant that it is never exhausted, and so pure that it is resorted to during violent heats as having sanatory properties.

After the disgrace of his friend, the king gave the Lodge to the merchants of Montpellier, with permission to *efface the arms of Jacques Cœur,* and to substitute those of France; but it seems that the townsmen of the great merchant had more feeling and more gratitude than the monarch, who wished to wipe out all memory of the benefits he had received. The citizens added the fleurs-de-lis, and placed their own cognizance of a tortoise; but the hearts and shells of the former proprietor remained in the house of him to whom they felt themselves so much indebted.

After the Revolution of 1789 the Lodge was sold as national property, and purchased by an individual who rebuilt it almost entirely, carry-

* From the Latin word *puteus,* a well.

ing out the wish of Charles le Bien Servi, by effacing all record whatever of his argentier.

That a man possessing so much wealth and consequent power as Jacques Cœur should be looked upon by the commonalty as the master of supernatural knowledge, is by no means surprising when the time in which he lived is considered. The instances are innumerable, of men of genius being regarded with awe as necromancers; and when it was plain that he held in his hand a wand which could conjure obedience from the great soldan himself, it is not singular that his wealth was thought to be a product of the stone of power, and his genius the gift of the spirits who obeyed him.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DINING HALL.—BUFFETS.—THE TABLE.—LIGHTS.—FRANCHER LA NAPPE.—BANQUETS.—ARTISTS IN FRANCE.—FOUCQUET AND MELLIN.

ALTHOUGH the king of Bourges was unable, during his forced sojourn in that capital of his little dominion, to exhibit the splendour which shone in his mother's court when at the height of extravagance, yet it only required funds such as Jacques Cœur actually possessed, to enable the great at that period to enjoy conveniences and luxuries which would not shame a modern establishment.

It was in their table in particular that the noblemen of that day delighted to display their wealth and taste. They indulged in contests of the most absurd expense; and all the rigour of the sumptuary laws, which it was found necessary to renew at the commencement of every reign, was unable to curb the torrent of the frenetic prodigality which ruined so many.

In fact, observes a modern French writer, there was no way for a great lord, shut up in his fortress in the country, to make an exhibition of his riches, except by displaying his heaps of gold and silver plate. This generally occurred on the occasion of some magnificent entertainment, announced long before it took place, and to which were invited all the nobles and gentry in the country where his castle was situated.

The eating-hall was almost always the most spacious apartment in the castle. On the walls, which were covered with tapestry, were figured scenes taken from the most favourite fablieaux and romances of chivalry. If there were no carpets on the floors, they were neatly strewn with rushes or flowers, and sometimes had mats, plaited with some ingenuity; indeed, it is not to be supposed, that an art, known to the most savage nations, should fail to be exercised by a people who were evidently sufficiently acquainted with the means of enjoyment and comfort.

In the centre of the dining-hall, then, stood the long table, destined for substantial display; and, at the other end, the *dressoir*, or *buffet*, or *eridence*, as these sideboards were called. They were sometimes to the number of three, one for silver, one for silver gilt, and one for gold. Disposed in shelves, one rising above another, they sustained rich basins and dishes and vases, enriched with precious stones, objects merely used,

as in modern days, for exhibition. These buffets, of which many are yet remaining, and of which one of the finest collections is still to be seen in the interesting Hôtel de Cluny at Paris, were formed of very precious and rare wood, and covered with the most elaborate carving, the perfection of which has amazed the eyes of amateurs after the lapse of centuries, for, in spite of the boasted improvement of art, nothing so original or so beautiful can now be accomplished.

Although to cover any part of such marvels appears to be an absurdity, no means of ostentatious display was allowed to escape, and occasionally these fine pieces of furniture were hung with cloth of gold.

A buffet-cover, worked in gold, was presented by the town of Orleans to the emperor Charles IV., which was worth no less than 8000 livres tournois. In France, the custom of exhibiting this piece of furniture in dining-rooms is confined to the peasantry in the remote provinces: in Brittany, for instance, the *armoire* holds an important place in a ménage; and in our own country the display on a sideboard still forms a very conspicuous portion of a modern entertainment.

It is not to be supposed that the board was left bare; on the contrary, the *doublier* was another vehicle for the evidence of riches, being worked in the most elaborate patterns, and of

singular fineness and beauty. This cloth covered the whole table; and at the end of the repast, pages came round with napkins and an *acquière*, which were offered to each of the guests to wash with. Before every person was a plate, either of silver or enamelled china, always very costly; and beside that, the *coupe*, *hanap*, *estamore*, *quart*, or whatever else the drinking-vessel was called, according to its properties, for some were very remarkable. For instance, there were cups, of which a specimen is in the museum at Bourges, curiously worked at the edges, out of which it required much ingenuity to drink, as the pipes which conveyed the liquor to the lips of the drinker were concealed in the pattern, and if lifted up at the wrong side, no doubt, by the spilling of the wine, caused infinite mirth amongst the assembled diners. Another cup was formed to create similar hilarity, for it was, according to description, formed like an hour-glass, and being filled at both ends, the guest was expected to drink off the contents of each end without spilling a drop; how this was contrived, appears indeed a mystery. There were little bell-shaped glasses for liqueurs, placed by the side of the large ones.

The knives were elaborately adorned at the handles; and some of them, which have been preserved to our times, were wrought in extremely graceful patterns. The points of these knives

were rounded, of course for the greater convenience of conveying meats to the mouth.

The salt-cellars were important appendages to the table, as above or below where they were placed indicated the place of honour and its degree. These pieces of plate were always very rich, as also was the *moutardier*, which it was the office of one of the attendants to hand or wheel round the table during the repast. It sometimes weighed twenty marks.

At the two extremities of the table were dishes called *surtouts*, which exhibited in silver or in enamel alto-relievo representations of different condiments: they were for show; by which it appears that the modern fashion of handing round the dishes which are to be eaten of must have been practised at that period. Here and there amidst the dishes were placed fountains, which continued playing either wine, rose-water, or orange-flower-water, diffusing a pleasant odour round.

The vase holding these essences was called *clepsydre*, and was supplied with sufficient liquid to last during the repast: it was usually crowned by a vase of flowers, and must have been peculiarly elegant, and deserves to be adopted at the present day.

With respect to forks, they do not appear to have been common, but cannot be supposed unknown, as especial mention is made of both forks and

spoons in the inventory of the *jewels* of Charles V. of France, who possessed no less than forty-three forks and spoons of gold, adorned with precious stones. In a detailed account of the reception of the Archduke by Louis XI. the same are noticed. The spoon-handles were beautifully carved in ivory, and might perhaps have been introduced from the East; of course, therefore, there was no want of them in the establishment of Jacques Cœur, nor of enamel and filigree cups: the fashion, indeed, of ornamented knife-handles might have also been brought by the great merchant from the same region. The poet Regnier, in speaking of an ill-natured man, says of him,

Dont la maussade mine
Ressemble un de ces dieux des couteaux de la Chine.

The light at these repasts was furnished by pages who stood round the table, each bearing torches in superb candelabra of gold or silver: in later times these candlesticks were placed on pedestals of various forms. Cellini made twelve golden figures, of great height, to hold lights for Francis I., which were no doubt ranged beside the board at festivals.

But there was a custom which by no means belonged to festivity, and which was an affront that nothing but blood could wash away. The consternation which it must have created amongst the guests may be easily imagined, when an offended lord took the opportunity of giving so

startling a hint to one of their number, that his welcome had ceased.

There is an expression peculiar to the early portion of the middle ages, *trancher la nappe*, which is thus explained:—A herald was despatched to the table, who was directed to cut in two that part of the *doublier* which was before the offending party, and to overturn his bread and his cup. This was a signal of hostility never misunderstood, and what followed may be readily conceived.

With such preparations for conviviality, it is natural to inquire what were those famous wines so much prized in this age. Infusions of herbs were common, which would seem to infer that the flavour of the vintage was not so delicate as that of modern produce: *pimpernelle aromatisante* was placed in the cups, on which wine, probably hot, was poured; and this was doubtless a winter drink. *Clarette*, a name common to English ears, but unrecognised in France, was not simple vin de Bordeaux, but a sort of hydromel, composed of wine mixed with honey. The *vin d'Arbois* was a great favourite, and seems to have possessed the qualities of champagne; but Beaune and Mâcon were famed then as now; and the wines of Bar Saint Pourcain, of the Loire, of Saint Jangon, Garlardon, Grenache, muscadine wines, and others, are spoken of as held in esteem.

Music sounded during the repasts, the instruments used being the rebeck, the contreviole, the lute, the tympanon, and the musette of Poitou, not unlike the Highland bagpipe. A jester was always at table, whose office it was to keep up continued merriment; and the feast concluded by a fresh *donner à laver*, spices, and the grace cup, which was the most potent of all that had gone before. This *maîtresse coupe* sometimes held three bottles, and was quaffed to the health of those most dear. The *Wiederkom* of the Germans was of similar dimensions and destination.

The splendours of a banquet in the fifteenth century are curiously exhibited in the following details of an entertainment offered by Gaston, Infant of Navarre, on the occasion of his marriage with a daughter of Charles VII., then, in 1458, in possession of all his rights, and no longer obliged to generous and devoted friends for even his daily bread :—

"Prince Gaston made the most triumphant banquet that ever had been seen before. In the great hall of St. Julian, at Tours, had been prepared twelve tables, each of them containing seven ells in length, and two and a half in breadth. At the first table was seated the king and the chief princes of the blood, as also the queen and the daughters of France. The maîtres d'hôtel were the Counts Gaston de Foix, de Dunois, de la Marche, and the great seneschal

or steward of Normandy. The first service was made with white hypocras and toasts; the second consisted of boiled *well fatted capons, and gammons of bacon,* accompanied with seven kinds of broths or pottages, all in dishes of silver, each service for the several tables having *a hundred and fifty silver dishes.* The third course was of meats roasted, yet not any other but pheasants, partridges, conies, peacocks, bitterns, herons, bustards, green geese, woodcocks, swans, teal, and all kind of fowls of the river that could be thought on. Besides, in this service, were likewise wild goats, harts or stags, with all manner of venisons. After this, twelve men brought (as an *intercourse*) a castle, with four goodly towers at four corners, erected upon a rock: in the midst of the castle stood a great tower, in form of a donjon, which had four windows, in which were placed four beautiful ladies richly apparelled; at other four windows stood four gallant young boys, singing most sweetly before the presence; and, to speak truly, this intercourse seemed a *terrestrial Paradise,* for on the tops and pinnacles of the towers and donjon were fixed the escutcheons and banners of France richly painted and emblazoned in colour, as also the devices of King Charles VII., and the order of the star in white and carnation.

"The fourth service consisted of fowls, as well great as small, the whole being sumptuously

gilded. This was followed by a second intercourse in the shape of a beast *called a tyger*, which, by cunning art, disgorged fire from his mouth and nostrils: about his neck was a rich collar, whereat hung the arms and devices of the king, very richly and curiously formed. This was carried by six men, each of them having a *mandillion* and bonnet made after the fashion of Bearne; and they danced before the lords and ladies, according to the manner of the country, which moved much mirth and laughter: and this intercourse was commended, above all the rest, in regard of the new dancing.

"The fifth service was of pies, tarts, dishes of cream, *orangeades*, and citrons, confected. Then came another intercourse, which was a great hill or mountain, borne by men: on the mountain stood two fair artificial fountains; from the one flowed abundantly rose-water, and from the other musk-water, yielding an admirable smell over all the hall. From divers quarters and parts of the said mountain issued forth young living conies, and sundry kinds of small birds; and in hollow places of the hill stood four youths and a damsel, attired like savages, who came forth at a passage in the rock, dancing, by good direction, an excellent morisco before the assembly.

"This being done, Count Gaston caused to be given to the heralds and trumpets, who waited and sounded all the dinner-time, two hundred

crowns, besides ten ells of velvet to the king of arms of the order, to make him a robe.

"The next service was of red ipocras, with wafers of divers sorts; and then came, carried in, a man mounted on horseback, very artificially formed, and attired in crimson velvet, but the whole consisting of goldsmiths' work. In the midst was a small garden, and therein stood *a poet*, gathering all kinds of roses, and other flowers, made of wax, which he delivered to the ladies, who made high esteem of such presents.

"The seventh service was of ipocras, and confections made in the forms of lions, swans, harts, and such like; and each of them wore the arms and devices of the king.

"After which was carried a living peacock in a goodly great ship. The peacock carried about his neck the arms of the Queen of Navarre. Round about the ship were banderoles, containing the arms of all the princesses and ladies of the court, who were not meanly proud that the count had so highly honoured them.

"In the midst of the hall was a scaffold, whereon were concerts of *singular voices*, with all kinds of instruments. After the banquet Count Gaston caused to be openly proclaimed a joust for all comers on the 18th of June next following, with articles and conditions such as are usual in jousts and tournaments." *

* Favine's Theatre of Honour.

When the time consumed in these entertainments is considered, the heat, the noise, and the crowd, it is not surprising to read, that, on the occasion of similar feasts given in honour of Isabeau de Bavière on her triumphal entry into Paris, both the queen and several of the princesses fainted away before the close of the day's festivities, and the king was obliged to command the halls to be cleared to give them air.

At a grand banquet given by Duke Philip of Burgundy and other princes at Lille, in 1453, on occasion of the vows they made to go to Turkey to fight against the infidels, some of the entremets are described by De Coussy, with great satisfaction, as singularly superb. Amongst others, he mentions, that at the opening of the grand door there entered "a monster, or *lutin*, strangely disfigured; for he was made in his lower parts like a griffin, all hairy, with great nails to his hands and feet, and his upper parts appeared as those of a man. He was dressed in green silk, striped with white; his jacket close to his body, and the hood attached to it: his face and beard were in strange fashion, and he carried in his hands two arrows and a target, and on his head he had a man standing up on his feet, who sustained himself by his two hands on the shoulders of the said monster, who was mounted on a wild boar, great and marvellous to behold, which was very richly covered with green silk,

according with the habiliments of the said monster, *who appeared to me a most strange personage.* Then, after he had made the circuit of the hall, he returned from whence he had come."

At the period when Jacques Cœur erected his splendid house at Bourges there was no want of artists in France, either native, or attracted from Italy by the certainty of adequate reward for their labours. The custom of illuminating books with gorgeous colours and gold caused many of these artists to employ their talents on those minute subjects which still excite surprise and admiration by their delicacy, finish, and taste. The greatest masters at a later period did not disdain to paint in prayer-books, and their pupils followed such illustrious examples. King René of Anjou, whose more important pictures are, probably, all lost, illuminated several manuscripts with his own hands in a style of extreme beauty, and it was only time and printing which caused this art to die away by degrees, turning genius into a more expansive channel.

The hand of the painter accustomed to miniature is seldom very bold, and therefore, when higher works of art appear executed by one used to this style, surprise is great that so much perfection is attained in a new attempt. This frequently occurs in the pictures of illuminators, and this is apparent on the walls of the chapel of Jacques Cœur's house, where the remaining

figures of saints and angels are executed with a skill inferior to none possessed by the first of ancient masters.

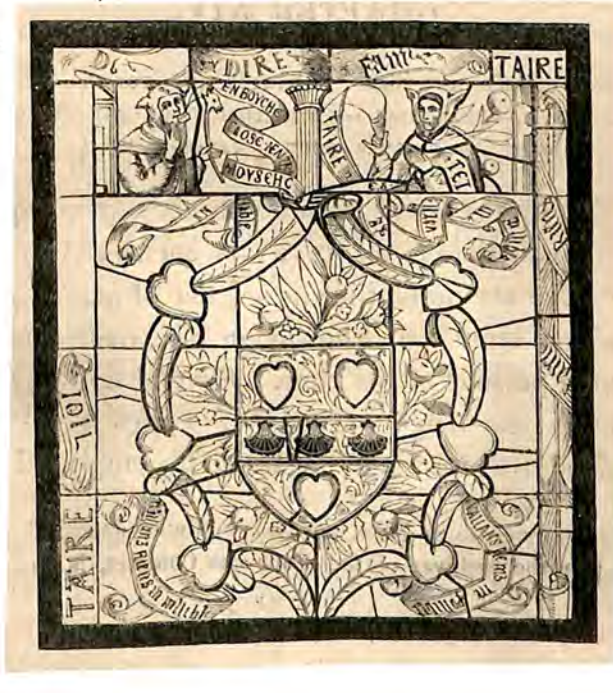
There is, in fact, great reason to attribute the painting of the chapel of Jacques Cœur's house to Jehan Foucquet, of Tourraine, an artist whose fame was great in the fifteenth century. He studied in Italy, under the master of Perugino, and executed several pictures at Rome; amongst others, the portrait of Pope Eugenio IV., which was considered so excellent as to be honourably placed in a church. He was a famous illuminator of manuscripts, and adorned a Book of Hours for the wife of the imprisoned Duke of Orleans, the finest poet of his time, who sung his lays in an English prison for twenty-five years after his capture at Azincour.

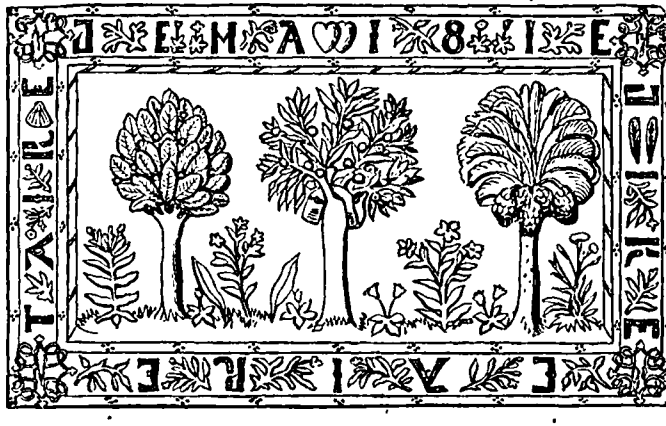
A man like Jacques Cœur, intimately acquainted with Italy and all its treasures, enormously rich, and possessing great taste, would doubtless avail himself of the talents of the first artists of his time, and probably employed Foucquet to embellish his favourite abode.

A celebrated painter on glass at this period was Henri Mellin, patronised both by Charles VI. and his son, Charles VII. His hand may, doubtless, be traced in the few panes that remain in Jacques Cœur's house, where the windows must once have exhibited stained glass nowise inferior to that which dazzles the eyes in the

wonderfully preserved specimens in the glorious cathedral of Bourges. One of the chapels of this cathedral and the sacristy were added by the great merchant, and of course he did not fail to employ the same artists in his own dwelling.

The exquisite arabesques in stone which adorn his house were also, without doubt, the works of Italian or French artists of the highest merit which then existed.





CHAPTER XIV.

JACQUES CŒUR'S KNOWLEDGE.—LAHIRE AND POTON.—POVERTY OF KING. — EXPENSES. — DESTITUTION OF THE COURT. — FRIENDSHIP OF JACQUES CŒUR.—MARIE D'ANJOU.

ONE of the great accomplishments of Jacques Cœur, calculated to serve his country, was his extensive attainment in the science of metallurgy, in which branch of knowledge he excelled most learned persons of his time. Several mining districts in the neighbourhood of Lyons had been confided to him,* and in them he employed an

* In a volume of MSS. entitled "Minute Journal," preserved in the archives of the Cour des Comptes, is the following entry :—"Jacques Cuer, argentier du roy, a présenté certaines lettres royaux, par lesquelles le roy lui a baillé et adcencé certaines mines à Lyon, jusques à douze ans, pour le prix et somme de 200*l.*"

Again : —"Charles, par la grace de Dieu roy de France . . . avons donné et octroyé congié, licence, auctorité, de mettre sus

immense number of workmen, obtaining from the rich veins he found a prodigious quantity of gold, silver, and other metals: his skill and foresight in this pursuit probably caused his success, which at the same time gave rise to the popular belief of his obtaining the precious metals by occult means. Besides this resource, his vessels brought continually from the East large supplies of copper coins, such as are mentioned by an Oriental writer on Mussulman coins as being called *fels*, and being eagerly sought for and melted down by French merchants, as well as others of gold and silver. Nothing seemed unknown in commerce, or neglected in improvement, by this extraordinary man, who aided himself by every means which knowledge, ingenuity, boldness, and perseverance could achieve.

Owing to the great distresses of Charles VII. during the period of the English sway, the money of the realm was from time to time greatly deteriorated, and it required infinite management to restore it to its real value when circumstances permitted. This was strictly watched by Jacques Cœur when master of the mint, first at Bourges, the capital of his master's dwindled kingdom, and afterwards at Paris. Great were the services he rendered the king in this particular; yet the very efforts by which he saved the realm were, in due

et ouvrir . . . les mynes tant d'or que d'azur, d'argent, d'estaing, plomb, cuyvre, léton, acier, comme aultre metail."

time, when his star began to wane, brought forward against him, and turned to his discredit.

The strict friendship and affection which for a series of years existed between Charles VII. and Jacques Cœur was proved at the time of the young king's marriage to Marie d'Anjou, when Bourges was the chief residence of the disinherited and persecuted prince.

So destitute was the king of money, that common necessaries were out of his reach, and it was the wealthy merchant who supplied him, not only with gold for his expenses, but even the royal table with provisions. A writer of the time mentions the startling fact in these words: "The king was reduced to such extremity, that Jacques Cœur sent him for his dinner two fowls and a loin of mutton."

Martial d'Auvergne in his "Vigiles de Charles VII.," has a quaint passage to the same effect:—

"One day Lahire and Poton came
To see their royal friend, and feast;
But all the cheer these men of fame
Found on the board was of the least:
A loin of mutton was their scanty fare,
Which, and two chickens, they were glad to share."

While the English and the faithless Burgundians ruled France at their will, the "king of Bourges" kept his little court in the most humble manner, as a record of expenses proves, kept probably not long after his marriage:—

"*Thursday*, 13*th day of July*. — The Queen and Madame Katherine to Pontoise, for fruit:

Cherries and fruits for the queen, 2 sous.
To Jehan la Nattier, for a knife, 2 sous.
Sum for day's expenses, 38 livres, 2s."

While the Duke of Burgundy adorned himself with the richest and most valuable jewels, and even the cap which he ordinarily wore was covered with gems of great price, the king was obliged to comb his hair with a wooden comb:—

"To Mahiet Gourdin, barber of the king's household, the sum of 30 sous tournois, for the payment of twelve wooden combs, the which the said lord has taken and accepted for his person."

Frequently the destitute Roi de Bourges, in order to conceal his poverty from the eyes of his courtiers, was accustomed to shut himself up in his apartment with his queen, where their coarse and poor meals were served to them without any witness of their poverty. The fact of Charles accepting such assistance as the poet records from Jacques Cœur, proves the familiarity between them, and the estimation in which the king must have held his generous subject, from whom he did not conceal the necessities which he strove to hide from others.

This extreme misery probably occurred about the time when the infant Henry VI. of England was made to usurp the throne of the ill-fated

father of Charles VII., and when France was torn by the numerous factions which threatened to destroy the country; for the fortunes of Charles were at that time at the very lowest ebb; there appeared very little hope that he would ever be able to regain his rights; without power, without friends, without money, driven into a small nook of his own kingdom, depressed, dispirited, indolent, despairing, nothing could be expected from him, and any friendship which he then received must have been indeed disinterested. His little court was crowded with needy followers, all ruined like himself, no one of whom could then assist him, even with their valour, which was their only possession; but Jacques Cœur was rich, noble-minded, affectionate, devoted, and energetic, and his friendship was as unwearied as it was sincere. While, by his extensive commercial pursuits, he enriched himself daily, it no doubt added to the pride and pleasure which success naturally excites, to reflect, that the wealthier he became, the more he should be in a condition to assist his sovereign when the moment arrived at which he could come forward with the sums requisite to assure the triumph of France.

The brilliant, though mournful, episode of the heroine of Orleans, which changed the fortune of the legitimate king, and paved the way to his future restoration, would scarcely have accom-

plished its end, had not the sinews of war been supplied by the magnificent merchant, whose overflowing coffers were placed at the disposal of the king. Alas! at this moment of his rising fortunes, the reflection naturally occurs, that if Charles VII. had really been worthy of the devotion of his subjects, he would have employed some of the wealth thus cast at his feet, to rescue that holy victim and martyr whom he allowed to perish in the flames, kindled by the enemies of France, before his eyes! But the "beloved monarch" turned away his regard from her whose mission was at an end, and reserved his resources for another occasion, pausing from his first triumph, and content to await the result of events.

The fate of the unhappy and heroic Jeanne might have been to Jacques Cœur a foreshadowing of his own destiny. Abandoned like her to his enemies, like her his name and fame were tardily re-established in the country they had both so faithfully served!

Charles was indeed *La Bien Servi*, with his poor court full of heroes; his subjects, though unable to show their loyalty to the full, being kept down by a strong hand, all devoted to him; possessing a friend in Jacques Cœur ever ready with substantial assistance; a wife in Marie d'Anjou, faithful, loving, and attached; and a fair favourite, who, unlike the usual style of such personages, excited him only to noble deeds.

The amiable Marie d' Anjou, sister of René, the troubadour King of Sicily and Naples, so well known in poetical history, was contracted to Charles when he was Count of Ponthieu, at the castle of Tours, where Charles VI. and his beautiful bane, the wicked Isabeau de Bavière, resided. Charles was at this time only eleven years of age, and as he had four brothers older than himself, he was, to all appearance, at a great distance from the crown. The bride had only reached her ninth year, so that the young couple were not in reality united at that time. It was not till 1422, the year of Charles VI.'s death, that their marriage was celebrated: the young king had little then to offer her but affection, and that she seems fully to have deserved, by her extreme amiability, gentleness, and goodness: her patience, of which chroniclers so often make mention, she probably had not, at first, so much occasion to exercise as in after years, when her husband's volatile fancies gave her cause for regret and sorrow.

The morality of other princes of the day was no better, or perhaps was less than his own. It is related of Philippe le Bon, Duke of Burgundy, that his infidelities caused great sorrow and distress of mind to his wife, for he was accustomed to admit the objects of his low amours to the balls and fêtes of the court, without the slightest regard to the feelings of his

duchess. In this particular, at least, Charles exhibited more decency; but when the Duchess of Burgundy visited the Queen of France at Chalons in Champagne, the two princesses frequently, it was said, indulged in mutual revelations and complaints of the wrongs they had endured from the unkindness of their husbands. "They had," says Olivier de la Marche, "the same grief and malady, which is called jealousy."

If the two princes were alike in this respect, they found their punishment the same, for each had in after times to deplore the ill-conduct of a son: unfortunately the calamity fell as much on the innocent mothers of the disobedient young men, though, towards his mother, Louis XI. redeemed himself in some measure by showing affection and respect.

Poor and depressed as were the fortunes of Charles when he was first married, he occasionally made a few progresses in his small dominions, and visited the banks of the Loire from time to time; now the royal pair made a sojourn at Saumur, now at Chinon and at Angers, where is still displayed in the church of St. Maurice, the splendid tapestry which was their gift. It is on every fête day, even now, hung from the pillars, and exhibits a curious specimen of the work held in esteem in the fifteenth century. In the church of Notre Dame de Nantilly at Saumur, which is also rich in similar tapestry,

are several other memorials of Marie d' Anjou; one, very interesting, is a marble slab engraved with the following lines, put up by the royal foster-children, herself and her brother King René, to their nurse's memory: a touching instance of the simple affection of both.

EPITAPH.*

Cy gist la nourice, Thuphaïne,
La magme qui ot grand païne
A nourir de let en enfance
Marie d'Anjou Raïne de France;
Et après son frere René
Duc d'Amon, et de plus nõmé
Come encor est Roy de Sicile,
Qui a voulu en cette ville
Pour grand amour de nouriture,
Faire faire la sepulture
De la nourice de sousdicte,
Qui à Dieu rendit l'âme quiete,
Pr avoir grace et tout deduit.
L'an cccc cinquant et huit,
Au mois de Mars 8 jour;
Je vous prie tout, par bonne amour,
Affin qu'elle ait ung pou du vostre,
Donnez luy bone paternostre.

Of this amiable princess it is recorded, that, "with respect to her mind and her virtue, although satire was then so much in vogue, prin-

* The author gives this inscription as she copied it from the marble slab against the pillar of the church, of which some account is given, together with details of the towns and castles on the Loire inhabited by Charles, in her work entitled "A Summer amongst the Bocages and the Vines."

cipally as regarded personages of the first rank, so that it was almost impossible to avoid it, no scandal was ever ventured regarding Marie d'Anjou; which proves not only that she was exempt from the faults common to those who composed the court of Charles VII., but that no suspicion of the propriety of her conduct had ever existed."

Marie was as just and moderate in her counsels, as in her actions, and was not only esteemed by the court, but loved by the people, who are generally quick in their appreciation of character. She survived her husband about eighteen months, dying the 29th of November 1463, at the abbey of Chastelliers in Poitou, on her return from a pious pilgrimage to the shrine of St. James of Galicia. Monstrelet alludes to her death in these terms: "She had, during her whole life, a good renown, being esteemed an excellent and devout lady, and very charitable and patient."

Her advice frequently checked the career of disobedience too much persevered in by her son, Louis, who, though a good king for France, was, as a private character, as detestable as could well be conceived; and the only trait in his favour appears to be the respect in which he held his mother.

She brought her husband twelve children, and throughout his life showed him undiminished regard and affection. They had been married about ten years when Isabella of Lorraine, one

of the most accomplished princesses of her time, the wife of René d'Anjou, brother of the queen, came to the court of Charles VII., to entreat his aid for her husband, who had lately experienced great reverses in his struggles for the possession of the kingdom of Naples. In her suite was a fascinating creature, her intimate and particular friend, nine years younger than Queen Marie, and in all the bloom of a beauty which knew no parallel in France. This was the too celebrated Agnes Sorel, who instantly attracted the attention of the susceptible Charles, and her wit, sense, grace, and desire to please gained her admirers everywhere; amongst the rest Marie d'Anjou, to whom the praises of Agnes were recounted by her sister-in-law, was delighted to welcome her as a friend, and, whether from her own wish, or by the suggestion of her husband, she was induced to request of Isabelle that the charming Agnes might be left in her native Touraine, and be in future considered in the service of the Queen of France.

CHAPTER XV.

LA DEMOISELLE DE FROMENTEAU.—LOUIS XI. AND THE MONKS. —PRAGMATIC SANCTION. — MEHUN-SUR-YEVRE. — CASTLES OF AGNES.—ART IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.—LOCHES.

La Demoiselle de Fromenteau, as she was then called, accordingly entered on her new office, and, notwithstanding all that has been said respecting her liaison with the king, the friendship of Queen Marie and herself appears to have been uninterrupted and sincere. This it is difficult to account for, under all the circumstances, unless, indeed, Marie d' Anjou possessed the politic qualities of the haughty Catherine de Medici, who, in after times, endured with apparent patience, the presence and the power of Diane de Poictiers. The characters of the two queens are so different, that it is the more strange they should resemble each other in this particular.

Charles long concealed his passion for the beautiful maid of honour, whose fair fame was guarded by the countenance of her confiding mistress; and so much mystery always hung around their loves, that time has never disclosed the secret of their intercourse.

Historians pass lightly over the reports of the intimacy of Agnes and the king, and but that there are circumstances which make it unlikely that their attachment was altogether pure, one would fain believe that the ties which bound them together were those cemented by patriotism alone, and that the indulgence of her royal mistress for Agnes arose from the same exalted source. Certain it is that the queen and the favourite worked together for the good of Charles and of their country, and that the conduct of Agnes in other respects, if indeed she were faulty in this, went far to redeem her errors.

The testimony of Francis I. in her favour may not have much weight as regards the purity of her life, as his morality was not of a very strict order; but the respect and reverence with which he names her, in his celebrated epitaph, prove the estimation in which she was held: it is the only instance on record in which a favourite receives such honours from so high a quarter.

She is described as singularly beautiful, and full of grace and spirit, animated and amusing in her manners and conversation, remarkably

gay, and though replete with wit and cheerfulness, solid sense and just judgment quite as much distinguished her.

As, of course, in a court where there were so many contending interests, she could not fail to have enemies, some have represented her as frivolous and extravagant in her habits and her dress, and she is reproached for infringing the laws which regulated the costume of females under the rank of sovereign princesses and duchesses. She is said to have worn the same furs, gold ornaments, velvets, and jewels as the queen, and an anecdote is related of her, that on hearing that her presumption in this respect was complained of by the Parisians, she was very indignant, and exclaimed, that "the Parisians were ignorant people, and if she had fancied they would not have shown her more honour, she would not have set foot in the capital."

Probably she felt that her services to the country claimed from them, at least, that her fame should be respected. For five years she remained in the queen's service, and that seems to have been the period when the gaiety of the court was at its height, and when the magnificent towers of Chinon and Loches echoed with the sound of revelry. There is still amongst the beautiful ruins of Chinon the Tour d' Agnes Sorel, where one of her apartments is the most entire of any in the castle;—what is singular

and strangely characteristic of the times is, that immediately beneath this chamber is a horrible oubliette.

Agnes, it has been observed, was accused of excessive extravagance in dress, and it was the extraordinary magnificence she displayed, as well as the advancement of her family, that gave rise to the first rumours injurious to her honour. Even though the famous anecdote be a fabrication which is generally related of her, when she wished to excite Charles to exertion,* still it proves that she was believed to have used all her influence to rouse him from the lethargy into which he had permitted himself to fall.

Not only was Agnes beloved by the queen, but though, from her favour with Charles, she had many enemies at court, those the most sincerely attached to him held her in the greatest esteem.

* The popular anecdote alluded to is the following:—Charles was one day in her presence consulting the Court astrologer, a personage always entertained as a necessary appendage at that period; she in her turn desired to know her fate, and the answer of the "cunning man" was, that she was destined to be for a long time the adored object of the greatest monarch of the age. Agnes, taking advantage of the opportunity to convey to the king her opinion of his supineness, with a grave air saluted him, saying, "Sire, if the oracle speaks sooth, I intreat you to permit me to leave you and repair to the Court of England, in order that I may fulfil my destiny, for certainly King Henry, who is about to annex your crown to his own, must be the greatest monarch of the two." Charles, shamed by this judicious sarcasm, from that moment threw off the sloth which repressed his valour, and showed himself worthy of the character that she sought.

Amongst these the chiefest was Jacques Cœur, and, in spite of the absurd accusation made against him on her sudden death, the best proof of her regard for him was, that she named him her executor in her will. Even the wicked, wilful, and incorrigible dauphin, afterwards Louis XI. who was said at one time to be her bitter enemy, and suffered under the same accusation of having taken her life as Jacques Cœur, showed the respect he had for her memory by the contemptuous answer he returned to the monks of Loches, when, with a view of pleasing him, they offered to remove her ashes from the church which she had endowed. He recommended them, if they did so, to relinquish at the same time all the benefits which they enjoyed by her donations to their establishment. This, of course, put a stop to their zeal, and the beautiful monument of La Belle Agnès, which still adorns the church of Loches, was permitted to remain, nor did the monks decline a further grant from the king which he made in her honour of 6,000 livres. Had Louis XI. held the memory of Agnes in contempt, he would scarcely have acted thus. There were, doubtless, moments in his after life in which he felt remorse for his unfilial conduct to his father. Politic as he was, he could not but be aware that there were points in the character of Agnes Sorel to be admired, and whatever might have been his feelings of jealousy

towards the fair favourite, he must have appreciated all that was valuable in her conduct.

One of the anecdotes told of him is, that when a young man at his father's court, Louis, disgusted at the assumption of Agnes, had been so far carried away by passion, that he had struck the beautiful favourite, and was, in consequence, banished by Charles to Dauphiné. There is no doubt of the turbulence of Louis, or of his continual ill conduct; but whether he really had any personal contest with the Demoiselle de Beauté cannot be altogether ascertained. If, however, this was the case, he did not show any resentment to her memory when he was of a mature age, and more able to judge of her merits. The sudden death of Agnes has been attributed to poison, administered to her by the agents of the dauphin, in consequence of her having discovered and informed the king of a conspiracy in which he was engaged; but Jacques Cœur, her personal friend, was also accused of being her murderer, as well as of being in the plot with Louis against his father—accusations which were got up for the purpose of effecting his ruin, and which were clearly disproved.

At that period if any personages of note died without previous illness, poison was always supposed to have been employed by some enemy to dispatch them; but if it had been desired to put Agnes Sorel out of the way, the time of her

retirement from court would surely not have been chosen. Her favour had evidently waned, and she was no longer so powerful as before, her removal was, therefore, of less importance to those whose ambitious views her prudence and wisdom might have thwarted.

In her will it will be seen that she left Jacques Cœur one of her executors, which proves her opinion of his integrity. Those associated with him were Robert Poitevin, her physician, and Etienne Chevalier, her devoted friend, the treasurer of the king, and a staunch ally of the great merchant. To the hour of her death, therefore, Agnes considered Jacques Cœur true to her interests, and the contradiction of his being accused of her murder is the more incomprehensible.

He is said to have been at one time opposed to her, disapproving of the expenses into which her magnificent style of living led the king; but this was, probably, only a passing cloud which obscured their friendship, and her good qualities no doubt soon effaced the unfavourable impression, for as both were patriots, they had one common cause, which united their interests.

It is a known fact, that many of the nobles attached to the cause of Charles VII., excited by the noble example of Agnes Sorel, who gave up all her plate and jewels to supply funds for the army, made offerings to the king of their richest possessions in this kind, not being provided, as at

that time Jacques Cœur himself was, with real money to place at his service.

It was not till after all was gained that these generous impulses faded away, and those who had sacrificed so much began to long for all the stores, yet undiminished, of the wealthy merchant.

It is recorded to the honour of the monks of St. Denis, that they supplied, to the amount of forty marks of silver, vessels of plate belonging to their refectory, so that, if the good ecclesiastics lived in state, their riches served a good purpose, since the money thus produced was destined to defray the expenses of the re-conquest of their country from the victorious strangers in whose possession it had been too long.

Dissensions having arisen between Pope Eugenius IV. and the council of Bâle, the pope declared this council dissolved, and convoked another at Ferrara. The council, however, instead of separating, occupied itself with discussions relative to the deposition of the successor of St. Peter.

With the hope of dissipating this schism, Charles VII. assembled the clergy of France at Bourges, where, on the decision of the council of Bâle, he instituted the Pragmatic Sanction, which he issued as the law of the kingdom, regulating the nominations and elections to ecclesiastical benefices, and declared it also intended to serve as a rule in several other matters of discipline.

This occurred in 1428, and it was at this period that the king conferred on Jacques Cœur the charge of master of the mint of Bourges, which had been already partially under his care.

The palace of Duke John, the Magnificent, the great uncle of Charles VII., which was at that time one of the chief ornaments of the town, was unfortunately destroyed in a fire, which occurred in 1695. It was here, doubtless, that the king resided; and here, in an immense saloon, said to be the largest in the kingdom, this famous meeting of the clergy took place. The chamber was 156 French feet long and sixty high, and the roof was supported without columns or pillars, like some of the Palazzi Ragione in the north of Italy.

The ordinary residence of Charles VII. when in Berry, appears to have been at the castle of Dun le Roi, of which a few ruined walls alone remain. As this castle and the town it protected were very strongly fortified, the king, doubtless, found it a secure hold during the attacks he was exposed to from the English and Burgundians, who usurped his authority in France; but in more peaceful times, or at least those less perilous, his favourite retreat was the chateau of Mehun-sur-Yèvre, once the residence of Jean le Magnifique. Charles VII. almost entirely rebuilt this castle, which he rendered extremely fine, and surrounded, as was but too necessary at the time, with powerful defences. One high

tower, tradition relates, was appropriated to his private apartments, and from thence he caused a sort of telegraphic communication to pass between this castle and a neighbouring fortress, situated at about the distance of eight leagues.

Either La Belle Agnes and her lover must have had eyes peculiarly sharpened by love, or the distance between them must be exaggerated, for it is difficult to imagine how they contrived to see each other's signals. Romance, however, to which nothing is impossible, affirms that when the divided lovers wished to be informed of their respective occupations, they placed a vase of flowers, or a lighted torch, in the windows of their towers, and knew by those tokens when each rose in the morning and retired to repose at night.

Agnes had two castles near, one was small, and called le Chateau de Dame. This is now destroyed; but in the museum of Bourges is still to be seen some of the furniture which belonged to it, and which presents curious specimens of the art of those days. There are several cabinets and chairs of carved wood, as finely wrought as any of later date, and a secretaire, which it would be difficult for modern ingenuity to surpass, either in design or execution. It is adorned with figures of singular good proportion, and has pannels painted in rich blue and gold, representing antique heads and armorial bearings; another piece of furniture is a toilette table

of cedar-wood, delicately put together, and having interior compartments in low-relief, showing groups representing scenes in the life of the Virgin Mother and her Son, admirably done. One cabinet has a cornice, supported by statuettes of Charles VII. in the character of the god Mars, Agnes Sorel as Venus, and other figures. There are also some medallions, which probably once adorned a chamber. One of these is a portrait, in carved wood, of Agnes, and one of Charles VII. as Hercules, surrounded by a group of warriors, who seem entreating him to leave Omphale: beneath it, written in golden letters, "Veritable portraicture de Hercule, emmaillotté de peau de lion: donné par le roy à la tendre Agnes, 1451."

The other castle possessed by the favourite, from whence the same signals to her royal friend or lover were sent, was one at Vorly, near Bourges, called at first Bois Trousseau, but afterwards, by Agnes herself, Bois Sire-aimé, in allusion to her devotion to Charles. La Dame de Beauté had many possessions besides, but these now spoken of were in the vicinity of Bourges, and here she resided while in the plenitude of that favour which gave rise to injurious rumours.

Amongst the treasures in the museum of Bourges, besides the furniture from the castles of Agnes, one of the identical vases is preserved which formerly adorned the towers of Mehun-

sur-Yevre: it is of china, high and large, and is ornamented with open-work, which gives it a transparent effect: the form is graceful, and the whole is entire. It conveys a remarkable idea of the advance of art in those days, and is an interesting relic of the mysterious liaison between the king and the fair Demoiselle de Beauté. The art of working in china seems to have attained great perfection at this period, as is proved by many specimens which time has spared. In this same museum are two other porcelain vases, one white, most delicately and elaborately carved; and another is one of those drinking-cups mentioned elsewhere in this volume, which are cut in an open pattern round the edge, so that it must have required singular skill to drink out of them without spilling the liquor contained within.

Limoges was in the height of its fame during the reign of Charles VII., and many are the plates and cups which the curious treasure from its manufactories: there are some of these enamels at Bourges, but the author has seen at Chenonceau a china plate of Limoges on which Charles and Agnes are represented riding both on the same horse; the king in a costume like that of a monk in robe and cowl, as Henry VI. is generally represented in the MSS. of the time, and Agnes in a tight gown fitting close to an attenuated form, which gives little notion of her extreme beauty: the faces of both are indeed sin-

gularly ugly, and their steed is a heavy lumbering dray-horse, with the tail tied up in a huge knot.

The person of Charles VII. is described by contemporary historians in this manner:— "His physiognomy was agreeable; but he was not tall, and his legs were small and thin. He looked to most advantage when he wore his mantle, but he preferred in general appearing in a close short vest made of green cloth, which disagreeably displayed his meagre legs and thick knees."

Although he is represented in the enamel in the robe which suited him best, the artist has not contrived to offer a very flattering picture either of the king or the beautiful Agnes.

Agnes lived a good deal at Loches, where the king had built her a magnificent suite of apartments, called in the country *Les Salles:* they were situated on the side of the rising sun, and commanded a splendid view of extended meadows on one hand, and immense forests on the other. Nothing can equal the beauty of this prospect, which may still be seen by the traveller who visits Loches, and ascends the high tower of La Belle Agnès, a square building of great antiquity, where tradition records, that when the king went out hunting he was accustomed to lock up his treasured mistress, "lest his jewel he should tine." Her usual residence, however, was at Beaulieu, separated only by a bridge from the castle of

Loches, and her abode was called L'Hôtel de Madame de Beauté.

The king bestowed on her the county of Penthièvre, in Brittany, from whence she was called the Countess of Penthièvre; and her château of Beauté-sur-Marne, near Vincennes, built by Charles V., gave her another title which pleased her royal admirer.

The domains of Roqueserien, of Issoudun en Berry, of Vernon-sur-Seine, also formed part of her possessions, which, it will be seen, were indeed considerable enough to excite surmises in most people, that the friendship of Charles was something more than ordinary.

Nevertheless, after she had been retired for five years at one or other of her castles, being no longer in attendance on the queen, Marie d'Anjou expressed a desire for her society, and sent messages to beg her return to court, appointing her to come to Paris in 1449.

This was about the time that the siege of Harfleur was going on. The king was at the abbey of Jumièges, and there Agnes had just joined him, when she was seized with a rapid illness, of which she died at the age of forty.

Her epitaph may be read in the chapel of the castle of Loches, over her tomb; it runs thus:—

"Cy git noble Demoiselle AGNES SEURELLE, en son vivant Dame de Beauté, de Roqueserien, d'Issoudun, et de Vernon-sur-Seine, piteuse envers toutes gens, et qui largement donnoit

de ses biens aux églises et aux pauvres : laquelle trépassa le neuvième jour de Février, l'an de grace mil quatre cent quarante neuf. Priez Dieu pour l'âme d'elle. Amen."

There are, besides, a great many Latin verses engraved on the walls in her honour, in which the title of duchess is given her, and the initials of her name are made to commence every line, in the quaint style of the poets of the day. There exists also at Loches a large manuscript book full of acrostic verses in her honour.

Enguersaud de Monstrelet speaks of her death and of the pious end she made: "The said Agnes," he says, "was very charitable and large in her donations to the poor and the church. During her illness she shewed great contrition and repentance of her sins, remembering Mary Magdalen, who was also a sinner, and invoking devoutly God and the Virgin Mary to aid her: and like a good Catholic, after having received the sacraments, she asked for the book of *Heures*, to repeat the verses of Saint Bernard which she had written in the book with her own hand; and afterwards made many vows, which were put into writing in order to be accomplished by the executors of her will, ordering certain alms to be given and sums paid to her servants, to the amount of sixty thousand crowns. Her said executors were Jacques Cœur, councillor and argentier of the king, Master Robert Poitevin, physician, and Master Etienne Chevalier, treasurer of the

king; and her command was, that the king alone, and for all, was to be placed above those three persons named.

"Finding her malady increasing, she summoned her confessor, made several reflexions on the nothingness of human life, and entreated to be absolved from her sins in virtue of an absolution, which she declared existed at Loches; the which her confessor did according to her desire."

Her death caused much grief in the hearts not only of Charles, but of her numerous friends, to whom she was extremely dear. It has been surmised that Etienne Chevalier was more deeply attached to her than mere friendship dictated, and the belief is founded on the singular rebuses on her name which filled his house: the same might perhaps be said of Jacques Cœur. No doubt, a person of so much beauty and talent would have inspired a passion of no ordinary strength in many a bosom, whether she smiled on them in return, or kept all her tenderness for Charles or for France.

It has been said that her physician, when called upon to give evidence on the trial of Jacques Cœur for her murder, reported that she died giving birth to a child, thereby refuting the charges brought against her friend and executor, but at the same time establishing the fact, that her *liaison* with the king was not merely friendly. It might be, that the mystery with which Charles

had always judiciously surrounded their attachment was considered too sacred to be infringed, and the secret of her situation was insisted upon by the king himself, until it became impossible any longer to conceal the truth; if so, Charles is even more to blame than for the rest of his conduct, to allow a charge of murder, which he knew to be false, to weigh down the unfortunate minister he permitted to be oppressed.

Yet, in spite of appearances, there are not wanting historians, who have asserted that the connexion between Charles and Agnes was purely Platonic. While she was living at court, it is asserted that Agnes was never in the habit of receiving the king alone, but was seen continually in company with other ladies of the court, when he repaired to places where she was; that no familiarities were ever known to pass between them, but that honour, respect, and esteem were her portion from the monarch, who evidently looked upon her as a superior person, to whose counsel he owed immense obligations.

If their attachment was friendship alone, it was one worthy to be an example to the world; if not, and if the scandal promulgated by other historians is founded on fact, one can but mourn that beauty and merit should be too weak for passion, and that great names should be sullied by great faults,

Which seas of tears
Can never wash away.

Agnes Sorel has always been the theme of the poets of France, who were never weary of singing her praises and exalting her virtues, contrary to that which usually happens to a flattered favourite, whose renown seldom lasts beyond the reign of the monarch who distinguishes her.

The poet de Baïf thus sings of Agnes, in a poem on the castle of Mesnil la Belle, which she once occupied. The verses, though possessing little merit, are yet a proof of the esteem in which Agnes was held; they were probably written about 1560:—

"C'EST ICI LE MENIL," ETC.

This then is Mesnil, named from her whose charms
Above all other themes the poet warms:
Agnes, the star of Charles, whose early fate
Left his fond heart forlorn and desolate.

Here perfumed airs amidst each secret shade
Tell of their ancient loves that cannot fade;
These ruin'd walls seem mourning in decay
That worth and beauty should be swept away;
The wind moans round them sad and heavily—
An echo of fair Agnes' latest sigh.

She, bright as Grecian Helen, famed in song,
Whose eyes held Charles in love's devotion long,—
Another Paris, who would fain have been
A shepherd youth with her his rural queen:
To live for her was all he cared to do,
She his ambition and his glory too.
From wars and high contentions he removed,
Content with her to love and be beloved.

But envious rumour whisper'd of disgrace,
Of tarnish'd name and of degenerate race;
Of one who at his lady's feet bow'd down,
Forgot his country, honour, and renown.

Without a blush such words could Agnes hear,
And bear reproaches on a name so dear?
With tender eloquence she woke the theme,
And bade her lover rouse him from his dream:

"Since, lowly as I am, on me thy light
Has shone so fondly and so purely bright,
And I have dared to answer to thy flame,
Ill it becomes me to eclipse thy fame.
Shall it be said, effeminate and base,
Bow'd to my will, enamour'd of my face,
Thou canst forget thy honour for my sake?
My king, my friend, my love, arise!—awake!
Arm! arm! and lead thy subjects forth once more,
And drive the haughty English from thy shore.
Let my ambition and thine own agree,—
To see a hero and my love in thee.
Oh, let my words dispel this idle trance,
Let Agnes be esteem'd in grateful France.
I would not honour made thee love forego,
But let love teach thee honour's laws to know!"

She spoke: her gen'rous zeal the monarch moved,
And virtue waken'd at the voice he loved:
A brighter flame in his roused bosom burst
From the same torch which had effaced it first;
And by the love for which reproach he bore,
He vow'd the English pride should be no more.
Then Victory, that, untrue to friend or foe,
With restless flight had hover'd to and fro,
Declared for us at last, and rescued France
Beheld her banners to the skies advance!

'Twas then, with conquer'd Normandy his prize,
The lover from long battles turn'd his eyes,

And 'midst the shades of lone Gémiège* sought
The lovely object of his tenderest thought.

Then Agnes came—she heard of treachery,
And flew to warn him of the danger nigh.
But Fate had led her to this holy fane,
And doom'd her ne'er to quit those walls again.

Alas! fond lover, after all thy care,
Thy toil, thy valour, was all hope but air?
All thy heart promised void? The trial past,
Is death and sorrow thy reward at last!

O Death! has beauty, then, no power to move?
Deaf art thou thus to constancy and love?
But great although thy power, and fell thy sway,
And in her youthful prime she fell thy prey,
The wrong is less than if, as Fortune will'd,
The days by Nature granted had been fill'd;
And those soft features and those eyes so bright
In dim and faded age had lost their light;
And that renown of Beauty's Queen no more
The world would give her, since its power was o'er.
No! to the last so lovely and so dear,
Her peerless star shone ever bright and clear!
Fair Agnes lives in never-ending fame
As long as Beauty shall be Beauty's name!

The celebrated epitaph of Francis I. on La Belle Agnès is to this purpose:—

Here lies entomb'd the fairest of the fair.
To her rare beauty greater praise be given
Than holy maids in cloister'd cells may share,
Or hermits that in deserts live for Heaven;
For by her charms recover'd France arose,
Shook off her chains and triumph'd o'er her foes.

* Now Jumièges.

CHAPTER XV.

ANTOINETTE DE MAIGNELAIS.

WHILE the fair Agnes was yet living, there had been at the court of Charles VII. a cousin of hers, much younger, and almost her equal in beauty, the daughter of her mother's brother, Jean de Maignelais. From an early age she was accustomed to be with Agnes, and was in great favour with the king, indeed so much so, that it has been supposed that their intimacy gave cause for jealousy on the part of Agnes. It is certain, that, only six months before the death of her cousin, Antoinette de Maignelais received a gift from Charles of an estate which had formerly belonged to her family, and which the king took from the Duke de Bourbon to present to her.

This estate had been the object of a long law-

suit between the Duke and Raoul de Maignelais, an ancestor of the young lady's, and had ended in its remaining in the hands of the Duke de Bourbon.

Shortly after the death of Agnes Sorel, Charles, who appeared, at all events, to have adopted her, married Antoinette to his first gentleman of the bedchamber, André Baron de Villequier, of Guerche, in Touraine; and, on this occasion, presented her with the isles of Oleron, of Marennes, and Arvert, as a marriage portion, with a pension of two thousand livres a year for life. The letters granting these advantages are dated October, 1450.

It is very possible that the kindness shewn by the king to Antoinette was merely a consequence of his attachment to her cousin Agnes, who had evidently taken her under her protection; but yet there are many reasons for doubting the purity of his intentions, particularly at a later period, when she became a widow, which event happened only four years afterwards. The Jesuit Bussières remarks, without scruple, 'The Lady of Villequier, the *niece* of Agnes, succeeded to her place, and took possession of the king as forming part of the succession of her *aunt*."

Their relationship, as thus put down, is a mistake, and the rest may be equally erroneous; nevertheless, there is no question that Antoinette was in the highest favour, and held a position

of equal power with the once beloved Agnes. She disposed of benefices and places, and nothing was refused her, so that the Dauphin Louis and his friends, who had complained of the influence of the former favourite, gained nothing by the exchange.

One of the reasons given by Louis for the step he took in retiring from Dauphiné, and placing himself under the protection of the Duke of Burgundy, was, that he was scandalized by his father's conduct with regard to this new favourite, who is represented by Du Clercq as the successor of *la plus belle femme du royaume*, "retained by the king at his court, being also very beautiful, and having always in her company a troop of the fairest young ladies she could find; the which followed the king wherever he went, and lodged always within a league of his residence. This conduct the Dauphin considered very unbecoming, and for this cause had absented himself from court more than twelve whole years, retiring to the province of Dauphiné, during all which period he had never received any supplies from his father nor from the kingdom; therefore he was forced to live on the country.

"Others," adds the chronicler, "say, that the reason of the king having sent the Count de Dammartin to summon him, which was the signal of his evasion, was simply because he wished him to be near his person, and intended to give

him a suitable establishment. But, again, it has been surmised, that, if king Charles had taken him at this time, he would have put him in such a place, that he would have been heard of no more, and that he would have appointed as the heir of his crown . . . . " Here a blank occurs in the relation, and the king's intention remains a secret.

A strange story is told of Antoinette, which gives some colour to the foregoing reports, and reflects but little credit on some of the parties concerned.

It appears that in 1455, when *Mademoiselle* de Villequier, as she is called by Du Clercq, was in the height of her favour, and "was said to do what she pleased with the king," a young beauty appeared at the court, who caused a singular sensation. She was named Blanche, and was the daughter of a squire called Antoine Retreuves, living at Arras.

Blanche was staying with the Dame de Jenly, when she was seen by the Baronne de Villequier, who instantly conceived a wish to have her amongst her "belle troupe," a party of beauties like those always attached to Catherine de Medicis in after times. Madame de Jenly refused, however, to give her up without the consent of her father, and took her back to him, that he might decide what was best to be done for her.

This Blanche is described as "la plus belle que on eust peu veoir ne regarder;" and her father, a worldly man, fully aware of her attractions, probably thought that her interest would be best secured by sending her to court. It was, therefore, arranged by her uncle, the Sieur de Jaucourt, and the Sieur de Jenly, that no further opposition should be made to the wish of Antoinette de Maignelais; and the fair Blanche, then eighteen, and her brother, Jaquet de Retreuves, a remarkably handsome young man of seven and twenty, were both introduced to the favourite, who retained one as her companion, and the other as her *escuyer tranchant.*

The remarks of the chronicler on this occasion are touching in their simplicity:—"True it is that the said lady held a great estate, greater than that of the Queen of France, for so the king willed it. She was very beautiful, and was married, and after the death of the fair Agnes, who governed the king entirely, she governed him equally, or even more than *her aunt.* And she had always with her three or four young ladies, the handsomest she could find; and they followed the king everywhere, 'en moult grand estat *et bobans,*' all at the king's expense. Now, notwithstanding these things, and that the father, brother, uncle, and the Seigneur de Jenly were fully aware of all I have said of the conduct that went on, yet

did they send the said beautiful girl, Blanche, to court, and her brother took her there. The which Blanche, when she left the house of her father at Arras, wept bitterly; and I have heard it related, that she would rather have remained with her father, and eaten bread and drank water. Nevertheless, she was obliged to go; and report said that her father had sent her off from selfishness and meanness, that he might be rid of the charges of keeping her, as also of his son, who was his eldest, although the said Antoine was a very rich man, and had large estates.

"And soon after the young lady, Blanche, had been with the Dame de Villecler, report went that she stood as well in the king's graces as the Dame de Villecler herself!"

If all this is to be relied on, the conduct of the Dauphin is less reprehensible than it has generally been represented. His attachment to his mother was great, and it must have been extremely mortifying to him, to see her not only neglected at his father's court, but insulted by favourites, to whom Charles gave up his whole confidence.

There is something in this conduct of Charles which appears reckless, and is in contradiction to the prudent caution with which he veiled his intimacy with Agnes. But Jacques Cœur, his constant adviser, was at this time no longer at his side

to give him salutary hints, and to suppress his weakness. He must have had many stings of conscience to subdue, when he reflected on his ingratitude to so true a friend, sacrificed for the most unworthy motives, and never to be replaced.

After the death of the king, Antoinette de Maignelais, who dreaded the resentment of Louis XI., retired as quickly as possible to Brittany, where her name is afterwards coupled with that of Duke Francis II., with no more honour than she had gained before at the court of France.

Louis XI., harsh and cruel as he was, had a very bad opinion of women in general; perhaps he considered his grandmother, Isabeau de Bavière, as a type of the sex; and, though he excepted his mother in the general condemnation, he probably had too much reason to deplore female influence in regard to his father's favourites. He was a bad husband to both his wives, but he nevertheless always professed to hold his second, Charlotte of Savoy, in esteem for her good qualities, which did not, however, command his affection.

He considered her wise and virtuous, says Brantome, "and there was need that she should be so, for he was a gloomy and suspicious prince, if ever there was one, and he would not have hesitated to *send her the same way he had done others.* When he died he commanded his son to

love and honour his mother, but *not to allow himself to be governed by her*; not that she was not both wise and virtuous, but because she was more Burgundian at heart than French."

Louis kept his queen always at Amboise, with a small and very mean court: "he obliged her to appear always very poorly dressed, like a simple gentlewoman, and left her continually to say her prayers, while he went elsewhere to enjoy himself."

Probably his pastimes would have been no more to the taste of his gentle, amiable wife, than his society could have been, for she was a woman of mind and taste, fond of poetry and the arts, was a musician and painter, and, according to the account of her biographer, "employed in solid devotion that time which is usually wasted by persons of her rank." She is said also to have kept up the dignity of her rank in a more distinguished manner than had been known in France since Blanche of Castile, the mother of St. Louis. Her person, although remarkably small, is said to have possessed grace, and her eyes were exceedingly brilliant; her complexion was of a clear brown, and her countenance very pleasing.

Commines, however, does not speak so favourably of her appearance; but all historians agree that she was a pattern of goodness and piety.

Notwithstanding the good opinion expressed by Louis of his wife, he yet, during the latter

part of his life, regarded her with so much suspicion, that he kept her little better than a prisoner, at a distance from the court, and commanded that she should not be allowed to approach her son when he should succeed to the crown.

In the early part of his marriage this strange husband seems to have treated her with something like attention. He chose her himself, without allowing his father to have a voice in the matter, for which Charles VII. was highly incensed against the Duke of Savoy, her father, and, but for the mediation of the Duke of Burgundy, would have taken revenge for the slight shewn him. After Louis had retired to the court of Burgundy, his wife joined him there, and their marriage was concluded, for the bride was but six years old when they were first contracted. It was said that the Duke of Burgundy, who was very anxious for the match, insisted on her being sent for, otherwise he declared that he would no longer afford an asylum to the dauphin.

Occasionally Charlotte was permitted to share the honours and festivities of her rank, and she sometimes accompanied Louis in his progresses, and even made a sort of grand entry into Paris, arriving from Rouen by the Seine, and being received throughout her voyage with pageants and *mysteries* such as were thought indispensable

at the time. Jean de Troyes relates how melodious were the virelays and bergerettes sung in her honour by certain young choristers of the Sainte Chapelle; and he dwells with delight on the ingenious device which she found *in her boat*, of a stag in confection, having round his neck her arms hanging, and which formed part of an exquisite collation prepared for her.

Emblems and allegories were not wanting in her reception by the citizens of Paris, and the fêtes and banquets given on the occasion were sumptuous in the extreme. It is recorded that she accompanied Louis to several magnificent entertainments given on occasion of the marriage of Nicolas Balue, brother of the celebrated cardinal then bishop of Angers, the bride being no other than the granddaughter of Jacques Cœur, the child of his daughter, who had married Jean Bureau, Seigneur de Montglat.

At some of the fêtes given at this time a curious custom is mentioned, that of the distinguished guests taking a bath before the commencement of the gaieties. It would appear that the bathing must have been in company, by the following account:—

"The first president, Dauvet, gave a grand supper to the queen, who went there attended by Bonne de Savoy, her sister, and the Duchess of Bourbon. Amongst other pomps prepared for the supper, were four baths, the first of which

was arranged for the queen. The *bad weather** and indisposition prevented the queen from entering, but the Duchess of Bourbon, Mademoiselle de Savoie, la Dame de Montglat, and Perette de Chalons, a bourgeoise of Paris, bathed therein."

It was usual at this period, and had been long before, to admit a certain number of the citizens' wives or daughters to grand festivities, out of respect to the city of Paris; these women were always chosen for their beauty and grace, as they were to present the best specimens of their class. To be a *bourgeois de Paris* was always considered a distinction, and the king himself and most of the princes enrolled themselves in the brotherhood. The royal body-guard was composed from this class, and they held a high position from very early times. Of course, Louis XI., who desired so much to repress the pride of the nobility, neglected no opportunity of advancing the claims of the bourgeoisie, and allowing them all their privileges.

From this class Louis appears to have chosen more than one favourite, of whom La Gigonne and La Passefilon have been named in contemporary chronicles.

* By this it would seem to have been in an uncovered situation.

CHAPTER XVI.

GOLDEN CROWNS.—LETTERS OF NOBILITY.—KNIGHTS OF ST. JOHN.—ASSEMBLY OF THREE ESTATES.—GENOA.—ROME.—AMADEO.

At an early period after the accession of Charles VII., Jacques Cœur, whose great knowledge exhibited itself in all that concerned commerce, and who had long been occupied in a subordinate capacity in the mint of Bourges, was named by the king the head of that establishment; and it was under his direction that those fine silver pieces were coined, some of which may yet be seen in collections, bearing the name of the town of Bourges, where they were fabricated and issued.

It was not till 1436 that Paris was again in the hands of the French monarch, and as soon as it became so, Charles, who well knew the value of the great merchant's abilities, appointed him master of the mint of the capital. Under him were issued golden crowns, bearing two crowned fleurs-de-lis; they were of very pure gold: silver

coins also appeared, called *blancs à l'écu.* This money bore a superior value to that issued during the period of the king's depressed fortunes, and being above that of the English, caused the latter to fall in esteem. Jacques Cœur lost no opportunity of increasing the value of money, and in his hands the commercial credit of the king continually increased. At one time coins were issued which were called "Jacques Cœur."

The denomination given to Jacques Cœur by historians is simply that of *argentier;* but his great credit with the king was not confined to any particular service, for he seems to have consulted him in all things which concerned his interest and that of the country. So strict was their friendship, that he was admitted by the king to his private table, a peculiar honour in those days, particularly to a person who had no pretensions to rank; and he is recorded to have even shared his couch with his friend, a distinction often mentioned in accounts of the manners of the fifteenth century, although the extreme intimacy it implies was not always a proof of real regard, as in the case of the Dukes of Orleans and Burgundy, who, having sworn eternal friendship, lain in the same bed, assisted at the same mass, partaken of the same sacrament, accepted of the same order of knighthood, and drunk from the same cup, parted no better friends, as the assassination of Orleans by his rival soon demonstrated to the world. This

custom continued up to a late period in French history, and is generally to be received as a mark of friendship and esteem, as it was in the case of Charles VII. and Jacques Cœur.

The just appreciation in which Charles held the important services of his argentier, is proved by the letters of nobility which he granted him, by which himself, his wife, their children, and all their posterity for the future, were ennobled. These letters are dated from Laon, in the month of April, 1440, and were confirmed in the same month by the Chambre des Comptes.

But although admitted to rank amongst the privileged classes, Jacques Cœur was far from abandoning his former career, and continued always to carry on his mercantile pursuits with the same vigour as formerly.

The impoverished nobles of the court found in him, as they had already done when at their greatest need, a friend ready to supply them with loans *without interest*, which circumstance, so honourable to him, proves that he derived no part of his great income from the too common practice amongst the rich of that day, usury. His mind was too liberal and noble to descend to petty gains produced by the distresses of others, and it was in open and honourable commerce that he accumulated the gigantic fortune, which, having been the providence of so many, was destined to bring about his own ruin.

While Jacques Cœur was ever ready to aid his sovereign and his country with his large means, he had it in his power to extend his assistance to foreign powers who sought his aid. He was able effectually to help the warlike order of St. John of Jerusalem, who, in their necessity, applied to him. This powerful community had long been guardians of the commerce of Europe against the attacks of the Mussulman pirates, who were always lying in wait to make the rich argosies that traded in the Mediterranean their prey. Jacques Cœur had, therefore, many obligations to the knights of St. John, and proved that he was not ungrateful for their safeguard of his property.

Under the command of Foulques de Villaret, the grand master, the monks Hospitalers had established themselves on the isle of Rhodes in the year 1310, after four years' severe struggle with the Saracens and Greeks.

Scarcely were they beginning to feel themselves secure, and to rebuild the fortifications of the island, than they were attacked anew by a Tartar enemy, no other than Othman, the famous progenitor of the Turkish emperors. Othman was, however, defeated in his attempts on Rhodes, and the order gained infinite honour by the bold defence they made. The Hospitalers were much enriched by their conquest of Rhodes, and by their portion of the possessions of the knights Templars, which order had been abolished to

their benefit; their wealth caused them to be the objects of continual attack on the part of the soldans of Egypt and all the Mussulman powers.

In 1440 Alnazar-el-Daher sent forth an armed fleet against them, composed of eighteen galleys, and a host of vessels of different sizes, filled with troops. Eighteen thousand infantry, and a large body of cavalry and Mamelucs, disembarked on the coast of Rhodes, and laid siege to the capital. For forty days the aged grand master, Jean de Lastic, had to sustain the most furious attack, during which he exhibited the utmost coolness, bravery, and prudence, in which he was imitated by those under his command. The determined resistance of the Christian knights at length tired out the assailants, and, with immense loss, the Egyptian chief was forced to retire.

But the grand master, notwithstanding this success, was well aware that he had further incursions to apprehend from such powerful and resolute foes; he therefore saw the necessity of obtaining prompt assistance, and determined to apply for it to the Pope and all the princes of Christendom, to whom he sent messages setting forth the advantages which would accrue, both to religion and the well-being of Europe, by their interference in favour of the warriors of Rhodes, who, successful and glorious as they were, could speak in a high tone, and claim the support of all by whom the cross was revered.

Much to the disappointment of the grand master, his nephew, whom he had sent as ambassador to every court, communicated to him the fact of having found all the princes whom he had visited so occupied with private quarrels amongst each other, that they turned a deaf ear to his representations, and he found that there was not the slightest hope of assistance from any of them.

Lastic and his knights saw too clearly that they had only to depend on their own strength and resolution; but at the same time they felt convinced that it was utterly impossible that they could sustain, successfully, a struggle so severe as that in which they had lately conquered.

The grand master was authorised by the Pope, under these circumstances, to terminate their ruinous war by some amicable arrangement, should such be offered him. The difficulty was, to manage this without compromising the dignity of the Christian knights, who were averse to the appearance of wishing to begin the negotiation. It was necessary that an intermediate agent should be chosen, and great delicacy and caution were necessary in choosing such a person. One alone appeared eligible to the knights, one whose great reputation inspired confidence, whose successes proved his great capacity, whose credit was equally conspicuous in the East as in the West, and whose intimate relations with the Sol-

dan of Egypt opened a free course to negotiation: they fixed unanimously on Jacques Cœur, the great merchant, and resolved to entrust him with their interest and their safety.

With the full consent of the king, and after mature deliberation with him on the subject, the argentier undertook the commission, and armed with safe-conducts, one of his factors conducted the agent of the knights of Rhodes to Alexandria, on board one of his master's galleys.

Through his skill and management a peace was concluded, in 1441, with the soldan; and the agent returned to the island with the joyful news, bringing back with him a great number of Christian slaves and others, who had been made prisoners of war.

Charles VII. saw with exultation this new proof of his distinguished subject's talent as a statesman, and, unwilling to forego any means of forwarding his own interest, when such acuteness and such discrimination were at his own disposal, he called upon Jacques Cœur to serve him in the same way, in superintending the proceedings of the states of Languedoc.

The assembly of the three estates of Languedoc had, from the earliest times, been the most powerful, devoted and at the same time independent of any in the kingdom: ever ready to make sacrifices for the public good, on all occasions they had preserved the right of remon-

strating against oppression and tyranny, and had never hesitated to prefer their complaints, when well founded, even in the presence of the monarch himself.

Languedoc had been the most forward in assisting Charles VII. in the expulsion of his enemies from France, and without the unshaken adherence and willing supplies furnished him from that part of his dominions, the success of Charles VII. would have been much longer doubtful. He consequently felt grateful for the loyalty and liberality he had experienced from the states, and took particular interest and pleasure, not only in preserving to them all their rights and privileges, but in granting them additional advantages.

Twenty-three prelates, (of whom three were archbishops, and twenty bishops,) twenty-three barons, and sixty-eight deputies of towns or dioceses, constituted, in the states of Languedoc, the three orders of clergy, nobility, and that which was called *tiers-état*, or commons.

On occasions of messages from the king, demanding supplies, royal commissioners were dispatched to the "persons of the Three States," being bearers of a sealed letter, which was opened by the assembly in their presence. They were received and re-conducted with the greatest honour. In the sittings they presided over the assembly in the name of the king. These com-

missioners were generally the governor of the province, or the general officer who presided in his absence, the intendant, and two treasurers of France, one of the district of Toulouse, the other of Montpellier.

All public works were regulated by the states; and it was owing to their vigilance and care that the province of Languedoc possesses to this day those magnificent roads which traverse it in all directions, as well as those superb edifices which so conspicuously adorn it.

In 1444 Jacques Cœur presided at the council of the states, together with Tanneguy du Chastel, lieutenant-general of the county of Maine, and governor of Languedoc and the duchy of Guienne, and others of equal note; and for several years ensuing his name occurs as attending in the same capacity.

On one occasion the states voted to Jacques Cœur large sums of money, in return for galleys, vessels, and protection afforded to their merchandise by him and two others: a similar offering was made to him to repay in part the great cost he had been at in supporting the army at the conquest of Normandy. These votes speak loudly of the esteem in which he was held as a public benefactor to the country, and are a proof, were any wanting, of the exalted character for probity and generosity which he had justly acquired.

Another important office entrusted to Jacques Cœur was that of negotiator in the affairs of Genoa, when the influence of France was sought in the midst of disturbances which distracted the republic.

The factions of Doria and Fregosa, and that of Adorno, had long contended, and the latter had obtained the mastery. The defeated party sought refuge at Marseilles, and offered to the King of France the sovereignty of Genoa, in return for assistance granted them.

Jacques Cœur was one of those appointed to treat with these parties. He probably foresaw that little advantage would accrue to France by the acceptance of this offer, but he executed his master's mission with skill and discretion.

The faithless malcontents, however, having attacked Genoa and driven out their rivals, took possession of the city in their own name, and excluded the French, who had assisted them. Afterwards, when Louis XI. received from the discontented republic the same offer as his father had accepted, he rejected it with contempt, exclaiming, "You give yourselves, it seems, to me; and I send you all to the devil!"

But the most important and honourable mission in which Charles VII. employed his argentier was, perhaps, that which commissioned him to restore peace to the church, torn by schisms which threatened to be as disturbative as those

which had lasted for half a century between the Urbanists and the Clementists.

Amadeo, eighth Duke of Savoy, disgusted with worldly grandeur, had abdicated in favour of his two sons, after having named as their counsellors, six noblemen of mature age and remarkable experience.

It is not unreasonable to conclude that ambition had as much to do with this act, in spite of its apparent humility, as religion; for, after the death of his wife, it had been predicted to Amadeo by an astrologer, a personage at that period who always played an important part in the drama of a royal life, that he would attain the dignity of the papal crown. He was a prince greatly beloved and esteemed by his subjects, who bestowed on him the title of Pacific, and called him also the Wise. Charles V. was dignified with the same appellation, yet was he as much addicted to astrology, the weakness of the wise of that day.

Whatever his motives might have been, Amadeo assumed a monastic garb, and, arrayed in a coarse robe of serge, with a thick knotted stick in his hand, his beard and hair allowed to grow as Nature permitted, he lived a hermit's life at Ripailles, a priory situated near the Lake of Geneva, and here he founded the order of St. Maurice.

In due course the astrologer's prediction came

to pass, and, on the deposition by the council of Basle, in 1439, of Pope Eugenio IV., the ex-Duke of Savoy was elected by the name of Felix V. He continued to reign for eight years, without being acknowledged by France, which still held to the cause of the deposed pontiff Eugenio, at the period of whose death the cardinals assembled in conclave to give him a successor, when the Cardinal of Bologna was chosen, who took the name of Nicolas V., to whom it had also been predicted that he should be pope.

Charles VII. hastened to acknowledge the new pope, and, in order to show to all the Christian world how much he approved this nomination, he resolved to render homage to the holy father by a grand embassy. He however suspended proceedings till he had had a conference at Bourges with the reigning Duke of Savoy, Louis, son of Amadeo, who, with himself, much desired to see peace re-established in the church. The duke readily agreed to use his influence with his father to induce him to an abdication, which he had reason to think the latter desired, provided it could be arranged with honour to himself.

The ambassadors to Rome named by the King of France on this occasion were, Jean Juvenal des Ursins, Archbishop of Reims; Elie de Pompadour, Bishop of Alet; Tanneguy du Chatel, Prevost of Paris, and Jacques Cœur.

To the wealthy merchant and minister he confided the care of rendering all things sufficiently splendid and magnificent to suit so solemn a mission, and gave him also in charge to revictual the town and citadel of Finale, which was still in the interest of France.

Jacques Cœur departed accordingly with Tanneguy du Chatel, having equipped, at his own expense, several vessels, and succeeded, by consummate address and foresight, in deceiving the vigilance of the Genoese, and in introducing stores of both provision and ammunition into Finale. After this exploit they rejoined the other ambassadors at Civita Vecchia. It is singular, that, although all the vessels employed in this effort belonged to Jacques Cœur, no attempt was made by the aggrieved parties to interrupt his maritime commerce in the Mediterranean.

The ambassadors arrived at Rome on the 19th July, 1448; their entrance is thus described by the historian, Jean Chartier:—"No living man ever saw so honourable an embassy enter Rome; so great was the magnificence, that such a company was never before heard tell of, which turned greatly to the honour of the king and his realm."

Nicolas V. offered the most advantageous conditions to his rival, if he would abdicate a title refused him by almost all the nations of Europe, for Felix had only in his interests and under his rule Piémont, Savoy, Geneva, and the town of

Lausanne, where he resided. The pope proposed to appoint him his perpetual legate to the duchy of Savoy, and to refrain from nominating to any benefice in the former states of Amadeo without his consent and that of his son Louis.

On this subject Charles VII. convoked an assembly at Lyons, where envoys arrived from England, Sicily, and several parts of Germany, together with many prelates and reverend doctors of the church. The propositions of the pope were generally approved, and a second embassy was dispatched to Felix.

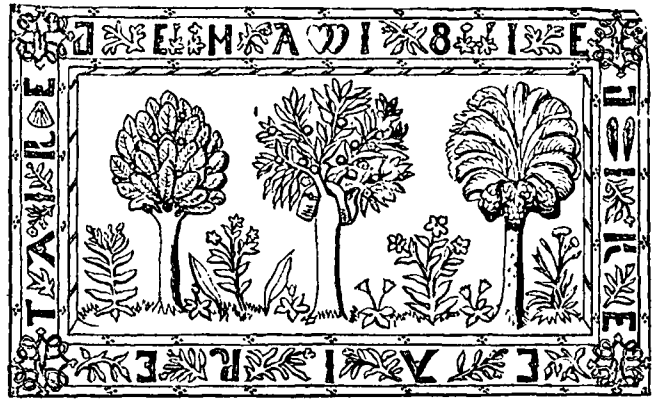
Again the diplomatic talents of Jacques Cœur were required, and the Count de Dunois, the most important personage in the kingdom, was named as the head of the embassy with him.

Felix, after having deliberated with the duke his son, accepted the offers made to him, renounced the papal dignity, acknowledged the supremacy of Nicolas V., and returned to Ripailles, where those who report of him favourably, say that he spent the remainder of his life in good actions, living surrounded by his knights of St. Maurice, who, without embracing a monastic order, are said to have been examples of propriety and goodness: a fact somewhat singular at such a period, when communities unrestrained by vows were not remarkable for their exemplary conduct. Indeed, it has been related of these recluses, that their

occupations were not altogether so edifying as they might have been, and some have gone so far as to say that their lives were passed in a continued scene of pleasure and amusement, from whence has arisen the French proverb *de faire ripailles*, which indicates a jovial retreat.

Be this as it may, Amadeo died at Geneva in 1452, in the odour of sanctity, at the age of sixty-eight.

Not a little honour is due to Jacques Cœur in the arrangement of this business, in which he spared neither expense nor energy, for, by his able negotiation, he restored that peace to the church which had been long disturbed by the factions of party.



CHAPTER XVII.

HISTORY OF THE POET PRINCE, CHARLES OF ORLEANS: HIS CAPTIVITY: HIS WORKS.—BALLAD.

It was in 1440 that Charles Duke of Orleans, the greatest poet of his time, the illustrious prisoner, who, taken at the fatal battle of Agincourt, had passed twenty-five years of the prime of his life in English fortresses, made his triumphal return to France; his release having been at length effected by the Duke of Burgundy, Philip le Bon, who received him with distinguished honours, and gave him a welcome such as must have gone far to make him forget much of the wretchedness which his long captivity had caused.

These two princes, both having to revenge a father murdered by his rival, forgot all family feuds in their present amity, and the friendship which they then vowed was not afterwards disturbed.

Charles VII., however, saw, with suspicion, the close intimacy between them; he had suffered so much from the families of Burgundy and Orleans, that he naturally dreaded a league against himself. It was, therefore, with little satisfaction that he heard of the intended return to his possessions of Charles of Orleans, and observed that the whole way from Burgundy his route was a perfect triumph, enthusiasm being at its height in favour of the restored captive. So enormous had his train become, that the king was alarmed and offended, and caused it to be intimated to the prince, that, if he came to his court with so large a retinue, he should deny him audience.

Charles of Orleans took umbrage at this, and retired from Paris mortified and disgusted. But Charles VII. at length consented to show him more courtesy, and after long negotiations, it was agreed that they should meet at Limoges. When they did meet, nothing could exceed the honour shewn to this illustrious duke by the king; and no cloud came between to trouble their friendship during the remains of Charles VII.'s life.

By his marriage with Isabella, eldest daughter of Charles VI. of France, the Duke of Orleans was nearly connected with Charles VII.; and his illegitimate brother, the illustrious warrior Dunois, generally called the "Bâtard d'Orleans,"

was one of the most devoted followers of "le Roi de Bourges" through all the vicissitudes of his fortune.

As Dunois was the intimate and sincere friend of Jacques Cœur, no doubt their mutual influence had been exerted to induce the king to receive the poet prince with proper respect; and the judicious advice of the wise and just councillor of his royal master could not fail to persuade him to pay due homage to a connexion who did him so much honour.

Amongst the many princes who, in those troublous times, experienced extraordinary vicissitudes, few had passed a life so chequered with evil and good as Charles of Orleans, the most original and elegant poet of his time, whose compositions, highly prized in his lifetime, continued for a long period afterwards to be held in the esteem, of which no lapse of time ought to deprive them.

The eldest son of Louis Duke of Orleans, who was murdered by his rival of Burgundy, and of Valentina of Milan, who died of grief at the sudden affliction which fell upon her and her children, Charles, at his birth, was surrounded by all that promised happiness and prosperity.

It was in the month of May, so dear to the poets of the early ages, in 1391, that exultation was at its height in the hotel Saint Pol at Paris, for there a son was born to the house of Orleans.

This palace, of which no trace now remains, and on the site of part of which stands the arsenal, was then of very great magnitude and importance. It had been erected by Charles the Wise, when regent of the kingdom, during his father, King John's, captivity in England, and completed by John on his return. It was a series of buildings collected together, with but little order or taste, and appointed to different members of the royal family as their residence. The apartments were numerous, and in that part called Hôtel de Sens, the enumeration of them by Dulaure is not a little curious. He names the king's suite as composed of several halls, an antichamber, a garderobe, a room of state, one called *le chambre où git le roi*, one called *les Nappes*, a chapel divided into high and low, several galleries, *le grand chambre du retrait, la chambre de l'estude, la chambre des estuves*, and others called *les chauffe-doux*, where stoves were placed during winter.

Besides this there were gardens, a park, lists, an aviary, a dovery, a menagery for wild boars and for large and small lions.

That portion occupied by the Dauphin Charles, afterwards king, and his brother, Louis of Orleans, was called the Hôtel St. Maur, or Conciergerie, and was equally extensive, having one chamber named *le retrait où dit ses heures Monsieur Louis de France.*

There was also the *Salle de Mathebrune*, so called because the adventures of that heroine were painted on the walls; and the *Salle de Theseus* was named for the same reason. Two rooms were tapestried, and one was designated *la chambre verte.*

Numerous courts connected these scattered hotels, named according to their uses. The *cour des joûtes*, which was the largest, *cour des cuisines, de la pâtisserie, des sauceries, des celliers, des colombiers, des gelinières, des fours du garde manger, de la cave au vin des maisons du roi, de la bouteillerie; la cour de l'hypocras, de la paneterie, de la tapisserie*, &c.

Enormous chimneys, such as now appear preposterous, were placed in all the rooms, even in the chapels; and besides this were numerous stoves.

Iron *chenets* of fine workmanship were employed for the hearths, and all means seemed resorted to, to render this vast establishment warm as well as splendid.

Although afterwards abandoned for the Hôtel des Tournelles by the French kings, on account of the air round the palace being considered extremely unwholesome, owing to the stagnant waters of the drains and moats, yet, at the period when young Prince Charles came into the world, it was in the zenith of its magnificence.

Although Isabeau de Bavière was then sup-

posed not to be on great terms of friendship with Valentina, yet, on the news of the birth of her son being carried to the queen, the messenger was gratified with a present of two hundred gold livres.

The gratified father resolved to signalize his birth by the institution of a new order, that of the Porcupine, or of Orleans. The godfather on the occasion of his splendid christening was no other than the identical Duke of Burgundy who afterwards assassinated Duke Louis, and was long the bitter enemy of all his race; but his enmity had not then developed itself, and he appeared as friendly and devoted as a paternal heart could desire. Charles VI. settled immediately on the child a pension of twelve thousand gold livres a year, and all seemed prosperous and promising in his destiny.

He had reached the age of thirteen, when his father resolved to marry him to the widowed queen of Richard II. of England, a princess two years older than himself, the daughter of Charles VI. of France. The young bride was very averse to the match, as it lost her her barren title of queen; and her chronicler remarks, "aussi pleura-t-elle beaucoup." Nevertheless, the marriage was conducted with great splendour at Compiégne, and the gorgeousness of Duke Louis in his apparel on the occasion was quite extraordinary.

Nothing is known of this first marriage of Charles of Orleans, and he never alludes to it in his poetry, as he does to many of the events in his life; but it was probably merely a marriage of form, which brought him no domestic happiness. Only three years afterwards his handsome, gay, accomplished father, fell a victim to the vengeance of his foe, the Duke of Burgundy; and the sorrowing and faithful Valentina soon followed him to the grave.

Her death, as has been before related in this volume, was accelerated by the distress of mind she experienced in consequence of the amicable composition entered into between Charles VI. and her husband's murderer, Jean sans Peur, of Burgundy. Instead of seeing the crime avenged, she was forced to submit to her children being dragged to Chartres, and there, at the altar in the cathedral, she was compelled to witness a scene, humiliating to her pride and revolting to her feelings.

The young princes were expected to ratify the peace between the reconciled parties by professing to accord their forgiveness to the assassin of their father, and stood like victims to perform their part. When the exulting and haughty Duke of Burgundy approached them to receive his pardon, the orphans were both so overcome by their feelings, that they burst into tears, and were unable to speak for some time.

Isabeau de Bavière, and the ladies with her, exerted themselves to reassure the young princes, and to induce them to pronounce the words required of them. They resisted for a great while, until the king was compelled to insist angrily on their compliance, on which Charles of Orleans was made to repeat the words dictated to him. "My very dear lord," he said, addressing the king, "I am pleased with all you have done; I pardon him all he has committed, since your majesty commands it, having no thought of being disobedient." His brothers repeated the same form of words, and the ceremony was considered complete, after which the court returned to Paris, and Charles and his brother took their mournful way to Blois.

Exposed to danger, and thus deprived of his nearest and dearest connexions, Charles of Orleans had to sustain a hard struggle against his powerful enemies, and was kept in a constant state of hostility to defend his own and his brother's interests.

He was about twenty when he became a widower, and almost immediately formed an alliance with Bonne, the daughter of the Count d'Armagnac, one of the chief partisans of his quarrel, and a powerful friend and protector. Unable, however, to contend successfully against the Duke of Burgundy, the Count d'Armagnac formed a compact with the English, and, fatally

for his country, they set foot on the shores of France, to afford their assistance in sustaining his faction. The brothers of the Duke of Orleans, with several other noblemen, were delivered over as hostages to the English for the performance of certain treaties entered into; but dissensions ensued; the new allies soon turned their arms against those they had come to assist, and the disastrous battle of Azincourt made the victorious strangers masters of the kingdom.

Charles Duke of Orleans, after fighting valiantly to the last, was, after the battle, found insensible, under a heap of slain, and being taken prisoner, was carried to England with the rest of the illustrious captives whom the fortune of war had thrown into the hands of the victor.

The young duke was detained in England for no less than twenty-five years, all the best period of his life. But lately a bridegroom, he was torn from her he loved, and compelled to renounce all his hopes, and leave his fortunes in the keeping of others.

Henry V. caused his noble prisoners to be treated with all due respect, but their captivity was strict. Charles was removed from castle to castle; now at Windsor, now in the Tower, now at Pontefract, and on one occasion, probably soon after his arrival, at a moated house in Kent, near Tonbridge Wells, called Groombridge Place, where he was kept in the custody of Sir Richard

Waller,* who took him prisoner after the battle. A memorial of his residence there is preserved in a shield of arms over the church porch of Speldhurst, near Groombridge; for, out of gratitude to his entertainer, the duke repaired the church, as well as nearly rebuilt the mansion-house, which till within a few years was still standing, but is now swept away.

He had not been long a prisoner when he had to deplore the loss of his wife, Bonne d'Armagnac, which bereavement he laments in moving strains, for his chief consolation appears to have been the composition of verses, the greatest part of which he wrote while a prisoner in England; and the beautiful illustrated manuscripts containing them are to be found amongst the chief treasures of the British Museum.

Little did the accomplished prince anticipate the long wearisome years of captivity which were before him, when, immediately after his arrival at Windsor, he began to enter into negotiations for his own and his brother's ransom, as well as that of the other princes, his fellows in misfortune. It was, however, the policy of Henry V. of England to retard as much as possible his re-

* "Sir Richard Waller had, in honour of taking so noble a prisoner, an additional crest granted him and his heirs for ever; viz. the arms of France hanging by a label on a walnut-tree, or oak, with this motto affixed, HÆC FRUCTUS VIRTUTIS."—*Hasted.*

turn; and so well aware was he of the importance of keeping such prisoners, that in his will he particularly recommends that Charles of Orleans shall still be detained.

Charles continued to receive his revenues from France, and appears to have lived according to his rank; but as many impediments as possible were thrown in the way of his agents, who, though not denied safe-conducts from the king, were yet delayed and annoyed more than was necessary.

He was transferred from the care of one nobleman to that of another, and does not seem to have had reason to complain of harshness, but the precautions to prevent his escape were very vigilant, and his hope was continually delayed.

Now at Wingfield, where, in after times, the unfortunate Mary Stuart was held captive for a short period, now at Bolingbroke, at Pontefract, at Windsor, London, and Groombridge, he appears to have had, at least, no monotony of residences to complain of; and, to judge by the paintings in his manuscripts, he enjoyed the society of his friends, to whom he is represented reading his poems in a splendid apartment, adorned with all the ceremonials due to royalty. Nor do his strains sound like those of one who suffered from other causes than the regret of absence from his country and his friends

in France. They are generally of a pensive character, but are occasionally gay and lively. At one period, indeed, when his hopes had been highly raised only to be again crushed, he utters very mournful laments, and alludes afterwards to his sickness, and the report of his death from grief; but his elastic mind recovered from the disappointment, and he goes on singing sweetly in his cage as before.

Twice he was allowed to go to Calais in order to negotiate for his release; and twice, having failed, he was re-conducted to his prison in England. The restoration of peace was the great object of his desire, and he expresses his feelings on the subject in eloquent numbers.

When the news reached him of the successes of the arms of Charles VII., he bursts forth in the following exulting song:—

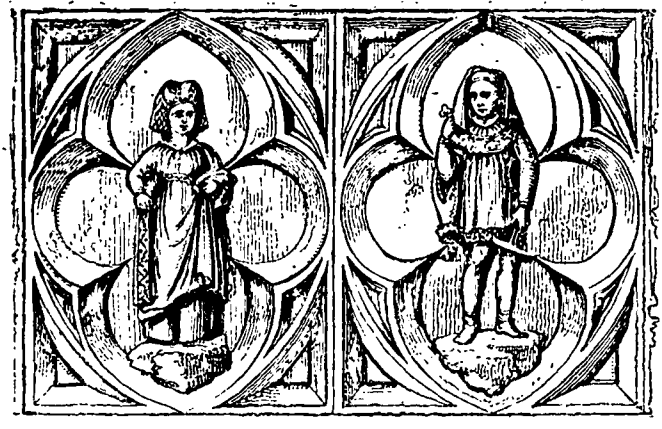
BALLAD.

"COMMENT VOY-JE LES ANGLAIS ESBAHIS."

I SEE the English pride brought low,
Rejoice my country, France, once more!
God shows his hatred to our foe,
Her courage and her strength are o'er.
Too long in servitude abhorr'd
Her victim, France, was doom'd to bow;
But God at length has drawn the sword,
And on our side is fighting now.
He hears, and to his people's cry
Gives back Guienne and Normandy!

When English hordes came pouring down,
  Vain was thy valour, vain thy fame;
And for thy sins Heav'n's angry frown
  Hath doom'd thee to a sullied name.
In chains and tears, midst woe and wrong,
  In just disgrace didst thou abide,
While England held her sabbath long
  In pomp, and revelry, and pride.
But God, who hears the mourner's cry,
Gives back Guienne and Normandy!

The treach'rous English, faithless still,
  Their kings desert, their land betray;
And factious chiefs assert their will,—
  The crown,—the people,—discord's prey.
The wrath of God is o'er them cast,
  And with one blow shall crush them all,
My country shall revive at last,
  And gain fresh vigour from her fall.
Her star has risen bright and high—
Guienne is ours, and Normandy!



CHAPTER XVIII.

CONTINUATION OF THE HISTORY OF CHARLES OF ORLEANS.

THE general style of the poetry of the Duke of Orleans may perhaps be judged of by a few specimens. The fashion of the time was a fondness for allegory, which is always tiresome, according to present notions, even when employed by a great master, yet it is singular how many centuries it pleased. Charles of Orleans carried it to a great length, and his verses are filled with personages such as Desplaisance, Confort, Dueil, Mérencolie, Doulx-Souvenir, Bon-Espoir, and, above all, Le Dieu d'Amour. Nevertheless, he sometimes escapes from these trammels, and when he does, as his thoughts are beautiful and his language also, his ballads cannot fail to charm, for the diction is by no means so difficult to understand or so antiquated as it appears a century later.

His verses are very numerous, and have been frequently collected, and, within a few years, have become much known, both in France and England.

BALLAD.

"JE CUIDÉ QUE CE SONT NOUVELLES."

ONCE more fresh rumours reach my ear,
Once more comes news amidst my pain :
Alas ! what may a captive hear,
To yield him pleasure yet again ?
Too oft the joys from Hope I drew
Have vanish'd into empty air ;
I know not what she means to do—
This sweet deceiver, false as fair !

If neither good nor happy now
The tidings that my fortune brings,
My heart has learnt so well to bow,
It yet can wait for better things.
Then let me slumber calmly on,
And lull awhile the thought of care,
Nor wake to Hope's enchanting tone—
That sweet deceiver, false as fair !

Alas ! my heart, 'twere hard indeed
Should'st thou the good there is conceal,
For I have served thee at thy need,
And long thy pain have sought to heal.
But, come what may, 'tis now too late
For stealing age and anxious care,
To trust soft Hope, with joy elate—
That dear deceiver, false as fair !

My lips no more shall breathe her name,
And Reason shall my burthen bear.
Be mine the sorrow, her's the blame—
That sweet deceiver, false as fair !

RONDEL.

"POURQUOI MOY, PLUS QUE LES AUTRES NE FONT."

Why feel I more than others do
The woes that Fortune deals to all?
Still forced fleet comfort to pursue,
That shuns my grasp and slights my call.

Must I for ever sail in vain
In seas whose shores no port reveals?
Why feel I more than others pain
And woes to all that Fortune deals.

I ask for Hope, above, below—
But she is sleeping, or is dead,
Or feigns, the more to scorn my woe—
Comfort and Hope from me are fled,
I know not what my grief shall heal—
Why feel I more than others feel!

RONDEL.

"LE MONDE EST ENNUYE DE MOY."

Alas! the world of me is tired,
And I of all am weary too:
Nought that my heart has e'er desired
Has now a pleasure to my view.
Whate'er I see but yields me care,
And grief is mine, whate'er befal;
The world is tired of my despair,
And I am weary too of all.

Ah! honest faith is hard to find,
Long have I sought, but reach it not:
Blame not my ever restless mind,
But think upon my adverse lot.
I turn from all my weary view—
Of me the world is weary too.

"LOUE SOIT CELUY QUI TROUVA."

Thrice blest is he by whom the art
  Of letters first was taught!
Sweet solace to the lover's heart,
  With painful mem'ry fraught.
When lonely, sad, and far away,
  His woes he may not tell,
A letter can at once convey
  His secret thoughts—how well!
The truth, the fond affection prove
Of him, the faithful slave of love.

By doubt and anxious dread oppress,
  Tho' hope may be denied,
Still to his watchful, trembling breast
  Some comfort is supplied.
And if she read with eye benign
  The tale he dares to trace,
Perhaps each pleading mournful line
  May yet obtain her grace,
And pity in her bosom move
For him, the faithful slave of love.

For me, full well I know the joy
  This blissful art can give;
And when new griefs my soul annoy,
  Its magic bids me live.
To her I write for whom alone
  My weary life I bear;
To her make all my sorrows known,
  And claim her tender care.
My chains, my bars it can remove,
Tho' I be still the slave of love.

Oh, that I could behold once more
  Those charms, so vainly dear!
That happy moment would restore,—
  The shade of many a year!
And all my future life should prove
How true a slave I am to love!

"BALLADES, CHANÇONS, ET COMPLAINTES
SONT PAR MOY MISES EN OUBLY."

Ballads, songs, and mournful lays,
  Are forgot in my despair;
Sorrow fills my weary days,
  And I sleep to dream of care.
If my grief it could beguile,
  I would sing as oft of yore,
And awake those tones awhile
  Which have soothed my heart before;
But I find both voice and lute
Are in sorrow hoarse and mute.

All the pleasant words I spoke
  Are extinct and pass'd away.
Lo! the spell of song is broke,
  And no sweetness marks my lay.
Those who once have heard me sing,
  Full of youth, and hope, and joy,
Pity now the falt'ring string,
  Which but echoes my annoy.
Lost my voice, and sad my lute,
Both in sorrow hoarse and mute!

The following rondel on the return of spring has a great deal of sparkling grace in the original:—

LE RENOUVEAU.

Le temps a laissié son manteau
  De vent, de froidure, et de pluye,
Et s'est vestu de broderie—
  De soleil luisant, clair et beau.
Il n'y a beste, ne oiseau
  Qu'en son jargon ne chante ou crie:
"Le temps a laissié son manteau
  De vent, de froidure, et de pluye!"

Rivière, fontaine, et ruisseau
Portent en livrée jolie
Gouttes d'argent, d'orfavrerie,
Chascun s'habille de nouveau :
Le temps a laissié son manteau
De vent, de froidure, et de pluye !

Nature has thrown the mantle by
She wore in wind and rain and cold,
And clothed her in embroidery
Of glowing sunshine rich with gold.
There's not a creature but rejoices,
The birds lift up their joyous voices,
And send to heaven the cheerful cry—
"Nature has thrown her mantle by!"

The streams and fountains with delight
Put on fresh dresses, new and rare,—
All silver drops and gold-work bright,
Dancing and sparkling in the air :
Prank'd in young Nature's livery,
Who now has thrown her mantle by.

After the battle of Azincourt, Henry V. of England addressed his prisoners, who were lamenting their hard fate, in the words which Juvénal des Ursins has recorded. He bade them be comforted; and not feel astonished that victory had declared itself against them, for which he claimed no glory to himself, knowing it to be the work of God, who was adverse to France in consequence of her sins, for there was no crime nor wickedness to which that country was not given up : she kept neither faith nor loyalty with any created creature, neither in marriages nor other things; she robbed and destroyed the people

without reason, and for this reason no good could come to the nation.

Charles of Orleans seemed to consider that the words of Henry were not without foundation, for he expresses himself in these lines in much the same spirit :—

"FRANCE, JADIS ON TE SOULOIT NOMMER."

France ! once thy name in ev'ry land
Was prized as truth and honour's gem ;
Thy sons could from all realms demand
Of courtesy the diadem :
Religion, courage, sense, and skill
By friend and foe allow'd thee still.
But, now, behold ! what cloud of shame,
Bold land of France, has veiled thy name !

Know'st thou whence comes this grief and wail ?
Know'st thou why falls the heavy blow ?
Hearken, for I must tell the tale ;
'Tis wise the fatal truth to know.
Thy sloth, thy cruelty, thy pride,
Thy luxury, and waste beside,
Have kindled Heaven to wrath and flame,
And left thy sins to blast thy name.

But, oh ! despair not, even now,
For Heaven hath store of mercy yet ;
In humble penance learn to bow
With tears of sorrow and regret.
How joyously would God once more
Thy former glorious state restore !
And He, who died a death of shame—
For thee, for all—will guard thy name !

Remember how, in days gone by,
The lilies deck'd thy azure shield.
"Montjoye, par liesse !" was thy cry,—
A note that forced thy foes to yield.

Remember all thy former pride;
Repent, and turn this wrath aside,
Again the Oriflamme advance,
O Christian, frank, and noble France!

In 1437 the duke authorized his illegitimate brother, the famous Dunois, to raise upon his domains the sum of forty-two thousand crowns, with which to pay his ransom and that of the other princes. It appears, however, that obstacles still existed, and the next year Charles, for the second time, was permitted to go to Calais to negotiate, but still, as far as his liberty was concerned, was unsuccessful, although he was able to obtain part of his object in certain treaties agreed on by the two nations.

In 1439 he was still at Calais, and at that period bought numerous jewels and fine wines, to offer as presents to the agents of both countries, who were arranging the preliminaries of peace. It was not, however, till February, 1440, that conferences were held at Gravelines on national affairs, the first result of which was the deliverance of the Duke of Orleans. The sum demanded was no less than one hundred and twenty thousand gold crowns. The dauphin and a great number of the nobles of France were sureties for its payment; and, at length, after five and twenty years' captivity, Charles of Orleans returned free to his beloved native country. Nothing could exceed his joy at his release, and, with an exulting heart,

he proceeded to Gravelines, where he was met by the Duchess of Burgundy, who had been chiefly instrumental in obtaining his liberty. The Duke of Burgundy arrived soon after with all his court. Their meeting was very affecting; the two princes embraced each other repeatedly with the greatest affection, and with the warmest expressions of congratulation and friendship.

From Gravelines they went to St. Omer, where a series of fêtes took place, and presents were offered to Duke Charles. From every part of the neighbouring country the nobility flocked to the spot, and the whole kingdom was a scene of delighted rejoicing.

It was immediately agreed that the duke, who was now a widower for the second time, should marry Marie de Clèves, niece of the Duke of Burgundy; and the marriage took place in November, 1440, with unequalled pomp. A grand chapter extraordinary was held by the Duke of Burgundy to receive the Duke of Orleans into the order of the Golden Fleece, who, in exchange, requested him to wear the collar of his order of the Porcupine.

"At length," says the chronicler, "after ten days passed in great diversions, the Duke of Burgundy went to Ghent, where he parted from the Duke and Duchess of Orleans. The cortège of the French prince became every day more numerous, so that by the time they separated

the Duke of Orleans had archers, and a train of more than three hundred horse, all the money necessary for their entertainment being furnished by the Duke of Burgundy.

"In this state he passed through the French towns, everywhere received and feasted as if he had been the king. He arrived in Paris the 14th of January, and there an equally distinguished reception awaited him.

"All this pomp and demonstration of attachment, however, was not looked upon by the King of France with satisfaction; and he let the duke understand that he would willingly receive him, but not with so numerous a retinue."

Charles of Orleans, disgusted at this want of cordiality, immediately retired into his lordship of the Orleanois, and repaired at once to his castle of Blois. It was from thence that he dated one of the first poems he wrote on his return from exile, and his feelings are clearly expressed by its pensive character:—

BALLAD.

"EN TIRANT D'ORLEANS A BLOIS."

My bark along the pleasant Loire
With gentle motion onward went;
From Orleans to the towers of Blois
My course, too long delay'd, was bent.
And many were the glittering sails
That lightly pass'd with joyous air,
Fann'd by the soft and favouring gales,
For them both wind and tide were fair.

My thoughts upon their voyage hung
As long I watch'd their forward way,
And in my heart fond wishes sprung—
Oh, would I were as sure as they!
The sail of comfort I might raise,
And court, like them, the flatt'ring air,
If I could hope, to crown my days,
For me the wind and tide were fair.

But I have been so often cross'd,
And found so changing Fortune's tide,
And in the world's frail bark been toss'd,
Without a hope my course to guide;
So stay'd by troubles and regret,
So kept by wishes closed in care;
That now I scarce dare ask if yet
For me the wind and tide are fair.

These vessels, whose free course I mark,
With buoyant joy the stream ascend,
While I, in my descending bark,
May still with angry waves contend.
Oh! when will Heaven, to end my care,
Proclaim both wind and tide are fair?

Monstrelet, in speaking of the final deliverance of the Duke of Orleans, has these somewhat significant remarks, to which the unfriendly conduct of Charles VII., on his return, gives peculiar meaning:—

"The English desired but little that he should obtain his release, because many of them were highly paid for his entertainment. And that was one of the chief causes why he was so long detained prisoner, according to the report of seve-

ral English themselves, who were in the secrets of the King of England.

"Certain it is, that if the King of France, and those who had the government of the duke's revenues, had long before resisted the great demands made for his maintenance, and had withheld the necessary finances, there is no doubt that he would have been delivered much sooner."

Charles met with a no less friendly reception in Brittany, than he had done in France. The Duke of Brittany and all the princes there vied with each other in showing him respect; and the country was enlivened by feasts and entertainments.

It was not without a political intention that Charles made these visits. He was anxious to gain friends and supporters in the approaching contentions for the *bien public*, which now occupied the attention of all. There existed much dissatisfaction amongst the princes, who had resolved to force the king to listen to their complaints. The Duke of Burgundy was the great instigator of this new dispute, which it required much policy to soften. Charles of Orleans exerted all his interest on the occasion in favour of the king, and succeeded in moderating the bitter feeling afloat. For this Charles VII. could not but be thankful, and probably felt that his interest was deeply concerned in securing the

friendship of his cousin. He expresses his sense of these services in letters-patent, dated May, 1442, when he made liberal presents to the Duke of Orleans.

The attempt to obtain possession, in right of his mother, of the Milanaise, now occupied Charles for some time: the efforts he made were frustrated, and he returned from Italy, where he had been in person at Asti, leaving a faithful servant and friend in the governor of that town, Louis de Montjoye.

He now took up his final abode in his castle of Blois, devoted entirely to literary pursuits, and surrounding himself with men of genius from all parts of the kingdom, so that his court became as famous throughout France, as that of René d'Anjou had been in Provence. Painters and illuminators found encouragement there, and the arts were both understood and appreciated by him and those enlightened friends whom he associated in his pursuits. His court must have been the most refined and elegant of the age, and, in the midst of peace and the restored prosperity of the kingdom, Charles of Orleans may have passed some very happy years, after the long night of sorrow and imprisonment which had shrouded his early years.

The Duchess of Orleans was also a poet, and entered entirely into all the taste and views of her husband. The lords, his companions, were of

the same mind, and everything was propitious to the enjoyment of literature and the arts. All ancient customs were kept up at his court, and nothing was neglected that could tend to the advancement of taste and refinement, according to the ideas of the day.

It was the habit at that period to entertain jesters, both male and female, and several of the fraternity of celebrity are mentioned as having been welcomed and supported at the court of the Duke of Orleans. Maître Colas was the fool attached to the service of the prince, and Dame Bélon was his companion and the favourite of the duchess. The Duke de Bourbon had a female jester in whom he took much pride, called Thommie, and a male named Jéhannet, remarkable for his wit. These were frequently brought in contact with Colas and Bélon, and the war between them afforded infinite amusement to the court, who took pleasure in these exhibitions and trials of skill. The most renowned of these unfortunate beings, to whom nature, in denying the customary growth of mortals, had granted superior wit and sharpness, was the fool of the Bishop of Mâcon, who generally carried away the prize from the rest.

This tranquil life of liberality and devotion to the most elegant pursuits of literature attracted all lovers of such pursuits to the court of Blois, where they were sure of being received with

welcome and distinction. The kindness and benevolence of the duke to his subjects secured to him their attachment and regard, and he was respected by his friends and allies throughout the kingdom. This was a happy reward after all he had endured, and he seems to have enjoyed it to the full, till rumours reached him that the King of France, Louis XI., having then succeeded his father, beheld his happiness with jealous eyes and desired to trouble his repose.

It seemed that Fortune was never tired of tormenting him, and he found an unkind and envious rival in Louis XI., who chose to indulge in injurious suspicions, and to resent the affection shewn by all to the duke, whose age was now advanced, but whose energy had, as yet, experienced no decay. However, at a meeting of the states at Tours, he was destined to experience the brutality of the unworthy monarch, who respected neither his age nor his character; and when he spoke in favour of the Duke of Brittany, Louis replied to him in such sharp and contemptuous terms, that the sensitive mind of the poet prince could not endure the rude treatment he met with. He retired immediately to Amboise, and never left that castle again, dying on the 4th of January, 1465, regretted by all but the king whose unkindness had shortened his life.

Thus ended the varied career of the most accomplished prince of his time, whose memory must ever be dear to France, as the father of the "Father of his country," Louis XII., and the uncle of the patron of literature, Francis I.

CHAPTER XIX.

LITERATURE OF THE AGE.—POETS.

It will be observed that there existed at this period a singular mixture of coarseness and refinement, of brutality and courtliness, of dissipation and propriety; and, although the long troubles which had desolated France seemed sufficient to extinguish every spark of the old Troubadour spirit, yet it is curious to observe, that seldom has poetry flourished more than at the different courts of France, Burgundy, and Sicily, at this very time.

The encouragement given to learning by the wise monarch Charles V., throughout his long reign, had had its influence; and in spite of the troublous years which succeeded, and the extravagance of the court, the graceful arts were not lost sight of.

In the adversity of Charles VII. the Muses were not silent, and though the theme of the

poets of the day was mournful, yet it tended probably to impart a certain degree of refinement to thought, which continued success generally fails to give. It is not on record that Jacques Cœur was himself a poet, although it is evident from what remains of his taste, that he had a mind quite capable of appreciating genius in all its branches: that he encouraged sculpture and painting there can be no question, and he was the intimate friend of two of the most refined princes then living, René of Anjou, who in his reverses used every means to protect his interests, and Charles of Orleans, whose reconciliation with Charles VII. it is more than probable that he effected, being, as he was, so fast a friend of his celebrated brother Dunois.

No poems of Charles VII. have been handed down to us, but many of the princes of his court were poets. The Duchess of Orleans wrote verses which her husband answered; but, what is more surprising, some of the fiercest of the warriors of Charles's camp sang lays of love and philosophy.

It is true that violence in war or cruelty in peace do not appear incompatible with the expression of the most delicate and generous sentiments, as is instanced in the case of the Bishop of Toulouse, Folquet de Marseilles, the first originator of the Inquisition, the furious persecutor of the Albigenses, and the "gentil trou-

badour," who, at the sacking of Beziers, exclaimed, as he led on his exterminating bands, who were attacking friend and foe, "Kill all! God will know his own!" Yet this bigot, deaf to the cries of humanity, could write such lines as to ensure him the commendation of the tender Petrarch, and address his lady love in soft strains like the following :—

If I must fly thee, turn away
Those eyes where love so sweetly dwells;
Be veil'd thy cheek, be hush'd thy lay,
And cease thy smile with all its spells.
Discard those gentle wiles that won me,
And those soft words which have undone me.

Then I may quit without regret
All that I cannot now forget;
Then may I leave thee, nor despair
To lose a gem without compare!

Bertrand de Born, also, that terrible warrior who fomented the fatal quarrels between Henry II. of England and his turbulent sons, and who is placed by Dante in a fearful position amidst the horrors of his "Inferno," could utter the tenderest addresses to the "dame de ses pensées," and might pass, in his verses, for one of the softest and most effeminate of swains.

In the East, the most cruel tyrants were frequently exquisite poets: the fierce Bajazet, in the intervals of his massacres, apostrophises the morning breeze — "O zephyr! say to that

false friend, who has spread the snare of deceit, 'Thou art fallen into the pit which thou hadst prepared for thy neighbour!'"

Certain it is that at this time, when France was torn to pieces by civil and foreign contentions,—when bands of the most ruthless robbers infested the country, and the manners of the nobles were rough in the extreme, if we may judge by their actions,—the spirit of poetry ruled

the court, the camp, the grove;

and amongst the fashionable poets may be numbered those personages whose hands, it might have been presumed, were more formed to wield a battle-axe than to guide a pen, and more used to brandish the torch which was to consume a castle or a town, than to tune the lute to please a lady's ear.

One is startled to read the names of the harsh warriors of the camp of Charles VII. coupled with that of the graceful Charles of Orleans; yet Pierre de Bourbon, Jacques de la Trémouille, Pierre de Brézé seneschal of Anjou, the murderer of his wife! the Duke de Lorraine, the Duke de Clermont, both famous in the wars for the public good, the Duke de Nevers, the Duke d'Alençon, and a host of others, all wrote verses, and are cited as famous for their knowledge and skill in the *gaie science.*

One of the motives assigned by his rival for

the murder of Louis of Orleans, father of the poet, was, that the prince, with too little reserve, recorded the praises of the Duchess of Burgundy's beauty in songs of his own composition. To this his son adverts in one of his poems, in which he makes the god of love enjoin secrecy of him, if he become one of his votaries.

"NOBLE PRINCE, CE POINT CY FORT VOUS TOUCHE."

And, noble prince, thy promise plight,—
For, ah! too much it touches thee,—
That lover's words, unveil'd and light,
Have caused great dole and woe to be.
Incautious looks and careless lays
May envy and destruction raise.
Vow, therefore, shouldst thou happy prove,
And be advanced by prosp'rous Love,
No boasting songs shall tell the boon,
For deadly vengeance comes too soon!

Though French poetry may be said to have been almost in its infancy at the period when Alain Chartier and the Duke of Orleans, both real poets, wrote, yet, as generally happens in all countries, some of the earliest were the best poets; for, though the language in which they composed improved and changed in the course of time, yet the grace of their thoughts, their noble sentiments, and expressive simplicity, are little impaired. This is the case with our own Chaucer and a few others; and this one cannot but feel in reading the poems of the minstrels

of the time of Charles V., VI., and VII. of France.

Few verses can be found more touching than the sad rondeaux of the pensive Christine de Pisan, the fair historian of Charles the Wise, who had to struggle with hard adversity, and felt the sorrows which she describes in such simple and plaintive strains as these:—

"EN ESPERANT DE MIEULX AVOIR."

I live in hopes of better days,
And leave the present hour to chance,
Although so long my wish delays,
And still recedes as I advance.
Although hard Fortune, too severe,
My life in mourning weeds arrays,
Nor in gay haunts may I appear,
I live in hopes of better days.

Though constant care my portion prove,
By long endurance patient grown,
Still with the time my wishes move,
Within my breast no murmur known.
Whate'er my adverse lot displays,
I live in hopes of better days.

She thus sings on the death of her father:—

"COM TURTRE SUIS, SANS PER, TOUTE SEULETE."

A mourning dove, whose mate is dead,
A lamb, whose shepherd is no more,
Even such am I, since he is fled
Whose loss I cease not to deplore.
Alas! since to the grave they bore
My sire, for whom these tears are shed,
What is there left for me to love?
A mourning dove!

Oh! that his grave for me had room,
Where I at length might calmly rest!
The world to me is saddest gloom,
And ev'ry scene appears unblest;
My hope is only in his tomb,
To lay my head on his cold breast,
Who left his child nought else to love—
A mourning dove!

But little of the poetry of the accomplished and amiable Troubadour-king René of Anjou, has reached us; yet he was held as no mean poet in his day, and took rank with many of those celebrated sons of song who flocked to his brilliant court, and found a welcome beneath his hospitable roof. He has been reproached by historians with carelessness and want of warlike qualities, as he was at the period in which he lived by his ambitious and turbulent daughter Marguerite of many sorrows, the fugitive Queen of England, who in vain sought to disturb his philosophy, and to make him see that there was more glory in the field than in a court of love; but René was content to afford shelter and sympathy to distress, and where he felt powerless to draw the sword to assist, he was ready to tune the lute to console the unfortunate. Many anecdotes are related of his firmness or indifference to calamities which would have shaken an ordinary mind: he could continue his favourite occupation of miniature painting, even when it was told him that he had lost his kingdom, as the beautiful partridges

and flowers on the margin of the famous Book of Hours which he is said to have executed with his own diligent hand can testify, for they are still to be seen, in all their delicacy and freshness, in the library at Poitiers.

Though averse to combats, he understood well the art of mimic war, and one of the treasures of the king's library at Paris is a finely illuminated manuscript, containing a code of chivalric laws, entirely written and illustrated by himself. In many towns of Anjou are still shewn certain pictures, discoloured by time, which tradition ascribes to his pencil; and his memory is even at this distant period held in veneration throughout that part of France as well as in the south, where he chiefly resided during the latter part of his peaceful life.

He corresponded with all the literati of the time, and kept up a continued intercourse with Charles of Orleans during his captivity. A few lines, however, are all that can be gleaned of this poetical correspondence, and these are in the usual style of the time, when it was the custom of princes and poets to be

wretched, to show they had wit.

He thus addresses Charles of Orleans, in a somewhat affected strain of melancholy; for the good king's grief, whatever it might be at the moment, could scarcely compare to that of the long-detained prisoner of Azincourt.

"SI VOUS ESTIEZ COMME MOY," &c.

If you had half my cause of care,
You well might seek in tears relief,
For of my woes the smallest share
Is greater than your greatest grief.
Yes, you might speak of love's despair,
If you had half my cause of care.

For I, tho' full of heavy woe,
Which more than death itself I fear,
Must feign a joy I cannot know,
And, sighing, seem of lively cheer.
This would you do, this must you bear,
If you had half my cause of care.

The Duke of Orleans answers the King of Sicily in the following strain:—

"CHASCUNE VIEILLE SON DUEIL PLAINCT."

All mourners love to tell their woe.
You think none ever grieved like you;
But I would e'en that joy forego,
And scarcely dare my grief review:
For ah! too little do I feign,
Too sad, too real is my pain;
And verse no solace can bestow,
Though mourners love to tell their woe.

Yet would I turn my tears away,
And do, perforce, as others do;
Would strive with fortune, if I may,
And fly the cares that still pursue.
Too well what wrings the heart I know,
Although I dare not tell my woe.

The Count de Clermont was a poet of his day, and wrote some lively lines, encouraged by his friend the Duke of Orleans, to whom he dedicated

them: they show the character of the times, when, in the midst of the hardest struggles, warriors amused themselves with trifles like this:—

"QUE CUIDEZ-VOUS QU'ON VERRA
AVANT QUE PASSE L'ANNEE?"

What think you we shall see
Before the year be past?
Many things will be
Hither, thither cast.
Here and there, how all
Will be toss'd and thrown!—
What think you will befal
Before the year is flown?

But yet, come what come may,
Tis Fate that rules us still;
Be we sad or gay,
In vain is strife or skill.
If a new world we should see,
Think you what that world would be?

The Duchess of Orleans was probably in earnest when she bewails her sorrows, though there is seldom much truth in the expression of those woes which are so adroitly arranged to a refrain:—

RONDEL.

"L'ABIT LE MOINE NE FAIT PAS."

'Tis not the habit makes the friar.
Alas! whatever guise I choose,
My heart is robed in black attire,
And every comfort will refuse.
In courtly dance and royal show
My trembling steps no measure know:
Still mourning weeds my thoughts attire.—
'Tis not the habit makes the friar.

My constant eyes their habit keep
To count with tears the hours that pass:
I move in pain, I wake to weep,
And hide myself to cry "Alas!"
I know no pleasure nor desire.—
'Tis not the habit makes the friar!

Martial de Paris, or d'Auvergne, one of the poets whose genius gave lustre to the period of which this work treats, was of an Auvergnat family, but born in Paris about the middle of the fifteenth century. Jean de Troyes, the historian, thus mentions him in his chronicles of the year 1466, under somewhat peculiar circumstances:—

"In the said month of June, when *beans* flourish and become good, it happened that several persons, both men and women, lost their reason, and particularly at Paris. Among the rest was a young man named Master Martial d'Auvergne, advocate in the court of Parliament and notary of the Chastelet of Paris, who, after he had been married three weeks to one of the daughters of Master Jacques Fournier, counsellor of the king in his said court of Parliament, lost his senses in such a manner, that, on the day of our lord Saint John the Baptist, about nine o'clock in the morning, such a frenzy took him, that he threw himself from a window in his chamber into the street, and broke his thigh and otherwise injured himself by bruises, so that he was in great danger of his life. This frenzy

continued on him for a considerable period, after which he recovered and became perfectly sane."

His death occurred in 1508. He was looked upon as the most witty and spirited writer of his day. Of course, like all those of the period, he could not escape inflicting on the world a work having for its subject "Les Arrêts de la Cour d'Amour;" and so pleased was he, as well as his readers, with it, that he carried on these sentences to the number of fifty-three: they were in prose, with an introduction of seventy-four lines in verse. The work thus opens, in the usual style of the day, when poets thought they should not be understood except they were precise as to the time when they begun their lays:—

> Environ la fin de Septembre,
> Que faillent violettes et flours,
> Je me trouvay en la grant chambre
> Du noble parlement d'Amours.

These courts of love were not exactly the same as those so popular amongst the troubadours and trouvères, though love-questions formed part of their business, but they were composed of men of letters, who communicated their works to each other, and gave judgments regarding the quarrels of lovers and authors. It must be acknowledged that they had enough to do.

The most celebrated work of Martial d'Au-

vergne is one called "Les Vigiles de la Mort du Roy Charles VII." It is a history of that monarch's reign, in six or seven thousand lines, and in different measures. Notwithstanding the occasional ruggedness of the verse, there are fine sentiments and much grace and beauty in the work, particularly in those parts in which the author speaks of the king.

His pastoral scenes have considerable merit; the following may convey some idea of their style:—

"MIEULX VAULT LIESSE
L'ACCUEIL ET ADRESSE," &c.

More worth the felicity,
Love and simplicity,
Welcome and kind address,
Laughter and tenderness,
Shepherds enjoy,

Than riches and treasure
In o'erflowing measure,
And glory and pleasure,
With care and annoy,

That great lords feel ever
With all their endeavour:
For more their distresses,
And Fate seldom blesses
Their dwelling like ours.

For we have, unceasing,
In labour our blessing,
And meadows and flowers;

And odours sweet smelling,
And fruit ripely swelling;

No terrors to harm us,
All nature to charm us,
And peace in our bowers.

If selling all my store,
My sheep and oxen all,
Could from his grave once more
Our dear lost king restore;
I'd yield them without pain,
I'd give them with good-will,
To see him once again
Alive and happy still.

All for the sweet delight
He gave his shepherds long,
Who flourish'd in his sight,
And mourn him in their song.

When my brown bread I share,
Whatever clothes I wear,
Tending my flocks with care,
For him I'll ever pray:

And for his lilies fine,
So precious, so divine,
None may with them compare,
So noble and so fair,
I'll honour them for aye!

Martial d'Auvergne's description of the lady judges in the court of Love is curious, as it presents a picture of the customs of the time:—

Leur habits sentoient le cyprès
Et le musc si abondamment,
Que l'on n'eust sceu estre ou plus près
Sans éternuer largement.
Outre plus, en lieu d'herbe vert
Qu'on a accoustumé d'espandre,
Tout le parquet estoit convert
De romarin et de lavandre.

He has some good lines on "The Advantages of Adversity," which are applied to Charles VII., who had, indeed,

known adversity,
Though born in such a high degree.

"PRINCES QUI ONT DE LA MISERE."

The prince who Fortune's falsehood knows
With pity hears his subjects' woes,
And seeks to comfort and to heal
Those griefs the prosp'rous cannot feel.

Warn'd by the dangers he has run,
He strives the ills of war to shun;
Seeks peace, and with a steady hand
Spreads truth and justice through the land.

When poverty the Romans knew,
Each honest heart was pure and true;
But soon as wealth assumed her reign,
Pride and ambition swell'd her train.

When hardship is a monarch's share,
And his career begins in care,
'Tis sign that good will come, though late,
And blessings on the future wait.

When Charles of Orleans kept his court at Blois, and gathered round him all the poets of the day, one, too famous in his day, a worthless man and the author of worthless and immoral verses was not left out. This was Villon, a great master of language, and one to whom his native tongue is said to be extremely indebted, but who has left few but specimens of his profligate turn of mind to warrant his popularity. He had much

caustic wit, which, too gross and coarse to be now endured, no doubt was highly relished in his own day, and must have formed a striking contrast to the delicate productions of his patron. Occasionally, in the midst of his satires, a few lines may be met with, which show that he possessed reflection, and that the spark of genius within him might have been turned to a good purpose, if a life of profligacy had not extinguished it.

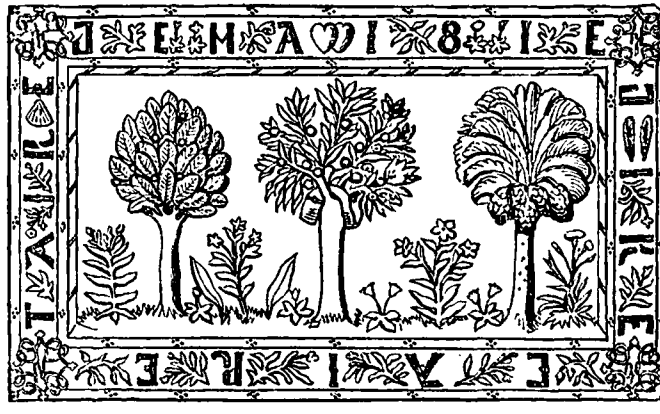
Villon is much lauded by all French writers on the subject of the early poetry of their country, as having understood, better than any poet who went before him, the mechanism of verse, and as possessing a perfect mastery over rhyme. Marot formed himself on his model, and La Fontaine is said to be infinitely indebted to him; but his works are only worthy of the oblivion into which they have justly fallen in a more refined age. As exercising considerable influence over the language of the fifteenth century, and as being contemporary with others more interesting, he, however, deserves mention. These are a few of his lines:—

"MES JOURS S'EN SONT ALLEZ ERRANTS . . . ."

My life has all too wand'ring been . . . .
Where are *they* now who reign'd so long,—
Of sparkling wit, of joyous mien,—
So full of mirth, and jest, and song?

Some stiff in death, and pale and cold,
With nothing left of what they were;
While others, still as gay and bold,
Are mighty lords without a care.
Some begging alms in whining tone,
Who bread *in windows* see alone.

Some in a lonely convent dwell,
A Celestins' or Chartreux' cell:—
Divided, scatter'd, great and small,
What varied fate attends on all!



CHAPTER XX.

STATE OF THE ARMY.—ECORCHEURS.—CONQUEST OF NORMANDY.—ANTOINE DE CHABANNES.—THE DAUPHIN.—DUNOIS.—READY AID.—INFRINGEMENT OF THE TRUCE.—ROUEN SURRENDERED.—TRIUMPHAL ENTRY.

CHARLES VII.'s cherished project was a design to re-conquer Normandy, and drive from thence the intruding English, who still retained their footing in his dominions. Doubtless, he had frequent conferences with his argentier on the subject, and to his judicious advice and assistance he owed the execution of his plans to effect that desirable end.

The army at that period was raised under circumstances which altogether prevented its being regulated by the ordinary discipline at present understood. When a monarch required aid, he applied to his nobles and his vassals, who got together troops for the time, ready to follow

their leaders to conquest which secured to them pillage and power; but the struggle over, the troops were dismissed, and their captains had no longer any responsibility or controul over them.

During the long continuance of civil war the authority of the monarch was of no avail in rebellions: funds were always wanting to them to keep up a regular army; and when the soldiers were no longer employed, their excited minds refused to return to peaceful pursuits; they therefore formed themselves into bands of adventurers, who overran the country in all directions, devastating and ruining all they approached, and compromising the state by their outrages. Such were the bands known in the annals of France as guilty of the most revolting crimes—the Écorcheurs, Brabançons, Grandes compagnies, Routiers, Trente mille diables, Quinze mille diables, &c. It is calculated that this rabble rout amounted to no fewer than a hundred thousand men, who knew neither law nor mercy, and who were nevertheless not without illustrious commanders; for many of the younger sons of noble families, and most of the illegitimate branches, did not disdain to head these marauders, having no nobler end in view than that which actuated the lowest of their band of robbers.

Olivier de la Marche, devoted admirer as he is of the order of chivalry, speaks out on this subject:—

"The whole kingdom was full of towers and fortresses, the guardians of which lived by rapine and plunder; and in the centre of France and the neighbouring countries assembled all manner of people collected into companies, calling themselves écorcheurs. These rode and travelled from country to country, and from province to province, seeking adventures and provisions: so that they found the means of living, they respected not the lands of the King of France, the Duke of Burgundy, nor any other prince; they made prey of whatever fell into their hands, and all were in accord as far as plunder went. Their chief captains were the Bastard of Bourbon, Brusac, Geoffroi de St. Belin, Lestrac, the Bastard d'Armagnac, Rodrigues de Villandras, Pierre Regnault, and Antoine de Chabannes Comte de Dammartin: and although Poton de Saintrailles and La Hire were two of the principal and most renowned captains of the French party, yet were they engaged in this pillage and this *écorcherie;* but they fought against the enemies of the country. . . . . The said écorcheurs did much mischief and injury to the poor people of France, and merchants and others."

It is true, that these robbers received, in their turn, no mercy when taken; and the same historian recounts, that so full were the rivers of Saone and Doubs of the bodies of the miscreants, that fishermen frequently drew forth from the

waters, instead of fish, the corpses of the écorcheurs, tied by twos and threes with cords. This summary justice had long occasion for existence, for this war of robbers and murderers lasted for many years, although it was at its height from 1435 to 1438.

The lawless ravages committed by the free companies at this period were innumerable, and it required the exertion of great determination to repress them, for it has been said that the expeditions which had gain for their end were conducted by some of the chief personages of the court. The whole country which did not immediately belong to le Roi de Bourges was considered fair game; and all the younger and illegitimate sons of noble families thought it but right to provide for themselves by pillage.

The renowned warrior La Hire, who did not himself disdain this method of recruiting his finances, encouraged his natural brother, Pierre Regnault, in the most daring adventures, one of which is thus told by Monstrelet:—

"In the year 1440, Pierre Regnault, who held the châtel of Milly, near Beauvais, which he had lately repaired, set forth one day from thence with about 160 combatants, as well on horseback as on foot, with the view of *foraging and scouring* the country round Abbeville.

"They took the castle of Yancourt and the lord within it, the which castle they pillaged entirely,

that is to say, of all the goods that it contained that were portable. The news of this affair soon reached the town of Abbeville, where were then the lords of Auxy, Guillaume de Thiembronne, Phillippe de Wancourt, Guy de Gourle, and several other gentlemen, who, immediately on hearing what had occurred, aroused themselves, mounted, and accompanied by some followers on foot, sallied forth about 300 strong, in order to set upon those who had committed this outrage, and to recover from them the goods they had obtained from the castle.

"When Pierre Regnault and his companions heard this, and found their enemies so superior in number, they sent a message to the Seigneur d'Auxy, excusing themselves on the pretext that they had sought only to provide themselves with provisions, of which they stood in need; which explanation, however, by no means contented the offended parties.

"Whereupon open war was declared, and Pierre Regnault, finding that the greater part of those who had issued forth from Abbeville were but of the common sort, resolved to brave them, and to break a passage through them, which he did with but little loss, and succeeded in discomfiting the party with considerable injury to them; for there were twenty or thirty left dead on the field, and nine drowned, who had fled, endeavouring to cross the Somme, amongst others, Guy de Gourle;

and more than sixty prisoners were made, the chief of whom were Messire Jean de Fay, a knight of Rhodes, the knight of Wancourt, and William de Thiembronne.

"After this achievement the 'fine, gay, bold-faced villain,' Pierre Regnault, returned to his château de Milly, in high spirits, taking with him his booty and his prisoners, whom he set to ransom, as the chronicles say, 'as if they had been English.' Nor did he let so prosperous a beginning lead to nothing, but, animated with fresh vigour, he, with others excited by his example, undertook fresh skirmishes in the territories of the Duke of Burgundy, who was by no means content with Pierre Regnault, and sent a remonstrance to Charles VII., desiring him to restrain his subjects from violating the peace then existing.

The king excused himself as he best might, saying that this conduct was equally displeasing to him, and that he would do all in his power to prevent a continuance of it, and even gave the duke full permission to revenge himself as he chose on the men who had committed this breach of amity. Nevertheless, to the great prejudice and destruction of all the country, the pillaging and rapine went on as before, and the excitement becoming general, other followers of La Hire took the opportunity of indulging in similar pastimes, sallying forth from the château of Bonne, near Laon, and ravaging the countries of Hainault,

Cambresis, and other places under the jurisdiction of the Comte de St. Pol, who placed a strong garrison, without loss of time, in the town of Marle, *the which garrison set forth one day in like manner* to harry the city of Reims, taking possession of a fort by the river called Bacà Berry, in which they placed thirty men and a captain.

The people of La Hire upon this resolved to take vengeance, and joined with themselves the garrison of Valois, who had been lately occupied in ravaging the country of Messire Jean de Luxembourg. Altogether they numbered 300 combatants, who 'incontinently and with great goodwill assailed the said fort, which they took, and put almost every one therein to the sword, and cast them into the river.' After which the French left a strong party in the fort to defend it.

About sixteen days afterwards the people of Messire St. Pol, and those of his uncle, Jean de Luxembourg, Count of Ligny, assembled to attack the said fort, but the other party abandoned it, leaving it to be demolished by those who arrived.

And in this manner was the country about Reims, the Leonnois, and many other marches and districts, torn to pieces by the different parties; all, it was said, owing to the fact that Messire Jean de Luxembourg would not take the oaths to King Charles, and kept garrisons in all his towns to oppose the people of the king.

There was no end to the frays and attacks on each other of the people of Bar and Lorrain, all attempts at restraining them by those of their chiefs who really desired to keep peace being useless; and the stray companies of France were only too happy to take part with whichever side it suited their humour to espouse, when they had no petty quarrel of their own to occupy their attention.

To pillage a church of its rich plate and ornaments was considered a notable feat, and many fell a prey to these devastators. The country people and traders in the meantime were entirely ruined by all these contentions, for by each party they were injured. For instance, the Count de Vaudemont is represented, after he had retired from besieging the town of Bar, as being "so inclined and obstinate to destroy everything that lay in his way from fortress to fortress," including churches, that it was in vain some of his company attempted to prevent the desolation caused by his progress, and the more reasonable portion of his followers were overpowered by those whose delight was in violence.

This same party of Le Vaudemont continued *en route* for the space of twenty-six days, and were greatly in want of provisions, which they seized wherever they found them; and then, when no combatants appeared against them,

took their way back to the castle of their chief, ravaging all they discovered as they went.

The good order established by Charles VII.'s government had greatly repressed these abuses; but, when warlike expeditions were projected anew, the same depredations and outrages followed.

There was little desire on the part of the fiery lords who were associated with these ruffians to do away with their companies, and the king, and those who were really friends to their country, had to work out the reform almost alone. Jacques Cœur, with his accustomed acuteness and good sense, saw clearly the necessity of putting down the evil with a strong hand, and urged the king to be firm and peremptory on the subject.

This, no doubt, was one of the causes which raised up against the able and conscientious minister a powerful foe, whose bitter hatred nothing but his ruin could satisfy. The Count de Dammartin, Antoine de Chabannes, whose pride could not brook interference, and whose turbulence required this vent for his unworthy exertions, saw, with ill-concealed fury, the exertions which Jacques Cœur was making to redeem his country from the disgrace which had blemished its fame for so long a period; he, in common with all the impoverished nobles of the court, was indebted in large sums of money to the rich mer-

chant, whose purse was never closed to the necessities of his countrymen. Their extravagance and profusion having only increased with their means, they all saw that some great effort must be made to efface their accumulating debt, and cheerfully did the Count de Dammartin undertake to be their champion.

A truce existed till 1446 between the English and French, and Charles VII. and his advisers considered this interval a proper time to attempt the desired reformation, and to create an army on which he could depend for the future. In spite of the opposition which he foresaw from interested persons, he resolved to make the effort, and summoned to his councils the dauphin Louis, René of Anjou King of Sicily, and his son the Duke of Calabria; Charles of Anjou Count of Maine; the Count of Richemont Constable of France; the Counts of Clermont, de Foix, de St. Pol, de Tancarville, de Dunois, and many others, both ecclesiastic and secular.

The king was gratified to find his plan of reform generally popular; and its advantages soon became so evident to all, that no obstacle was openly thrown in his way. He was energetically supported by the Constable de Richemont and his friends, and all succeeded as could be desired.

The finances were placed in a position to answer all demands; a code of laws was drawn

up for the future maintenance of troops; all former misdemeanours were forgiven, but the strictest penalties were exacted for any outrage hereafter to be committed.

Things being thus settled, after the dismissal of the great body of his troops in 1445, Charles VII. retained for the maintenance of his power a permanent army of 9000 cavalry and 6000 infantry. This establishment was an overwhelming blow to the power of the feudal aristocracy, for it rendered their power almost null; but great and salutary were the advantages which this wise measure produced to the country. Commerce began instantly to flourish, towns and villages to revive, labourers to resume their occupations, and all fear of ruin from the ferocious marauders who had so long desolated the kingdom was at an end.

It seemed as though a golden age were dawning upon France; and to whom was the king and the nation more indebted for this happy change, than to the friend of his country and his king, the argentier Jacques Cœur?

This happy state of circumstances was destined to be disturbed by the ingratitude and turbulence of the Dauphin Louis, who had already been pardoned for a revolt, which was called "La Praguerie," but who had quitted the court, and retired to Dauphiné, whence he continually distressed and annoyed his father by his tyrannous and violent proceedings.

The picture which England presented at this time was in sad contrast to that of France. The wars of the two Roses distracted the country from one end to the other, and the interests of the nation in its conquered provinces were forgotten in domestic dissensions. The government of Normandy was left without money to repair fortifications or pay troops. The French, who had submitted to a foreign yoke, had become the more impatient of it as they observed the glory and success of their conquerors giving way before the star of their legitimate monarch, and many had entered into negotiations and plots against the English. The cruel execution of the heroine of Orleans, although chiefly brought about by French treachery and cupidity, rankled in the hearts of the disgraced sons of the soil, and they looked to Dunois, the sworn brother in arms of the ill-fated Jeanne, to revenge her death.

Dunois was at this date about the age of forty-six, and he was then grand-chamberlain of France. His courage was such as distinguished the Paladins of old; his character was, like that of his half-brother, the poet Charles, superior to his time; he was adored by his soldiers, and every noble of the warlike court of Charles VII. was proud to combat under his banner.

He had been for awhile led away from his allegiance by the arts of the dauphin, probably

excited by his own desire for action, and his fear of peace preventing him from carrying out the work of vengeance which he cherished; but he soon returned to the loyalty and devotion he had always proved in the worst times to his king. Charles rewarded the frankness he shewed in the avowal of his fault, by naming him lieutenant-general of the kingdom.

The time seemed now arrived, both in the opinion of Dunois and Jacques Cœur, who was his intimate and particular friend, to make the great effort to expel the invading English, whose only hold was Normandy. The argentier had always continued to advance large sums of money to his royal master, and he saw with pain that too much was expended in luxury. Charles, in fact, left himself nothing with which to execute the plan he had the patriotic idea of forming. He looked round him, and saw his treasure wasted in riotous living, for adversity and privation seldom teach prudence to monarchs. He grieved to behold the moment arrived when he might gain all but for his reckless weakness, and he turned away from his empty coffers with sorrow and confusion.

But there was still a friendly hand ready to relieve him, one that had for years been ever stretched forth when his necessities demanded help, one that was never weary with giving, and whose bounty seemed but to grow with the oc-

casion. Jacques Cœur, who observed and knew the cause of the king's depression of spirits, sought him in his chamber, and thus addressed him:—

"Sire," said he, "under the shadow of your protection I am aware that the great possessions I have were obtained: to you I am indebted for profit and honour, both at home and even in a pagan land; for in honour of you has the soldan granted me a safe-conduct for my galleys, and my factors are safe, by his command, when they repair hither and thither to transact their commercial engagements. From all these advantages I have acquired great wealth. Sire, whatever I have is yours."

Charles, touched with this generosity, at once communicated to him his necessity: "Lend me, good friend," said he, "a sum of money that I may be enabled to drive the English out of Normandy."

"On this," recounts his historian, Mathieu de Coucy, "Jacques Cœur immediately agreed to lend the king two hundred thousand crowns, the which he did."

There was now no obstacle left, and, as if to hasten the catastrophe, the English themselves infringed the truce, which was to be in force for four years, having surprised the town of Fougères, which they took, and likewise declared war against Spain and Scotland, both allies of France, contrary

to the treaties entered into by both parties. They had also committed various inroads in the neighbourhood of Orleans, Chartres, Beauvais, Amiens, and Paris. All remonstrance had been vain, and these incursions still continued: the English appeared to require some such excitement, for they were tired, not only of the truce, but of the indifference shewn by their government to all their applications for assistance to enable the governor to maintain the expenses of his sojourn in Normandy.

The intestine dissensions which tore England to pieces prevented proper attention being paid to the wants of those subjects to whom was left the care of the conquests in France; and the citizens of every town, seeing the success which attended Charles VII., no longer concealed their wish to return to their allegiance.

Not a moment was lost by the French: Dunois was named commander of a chosen army, and set forth on an expedition which he panted to begin. Scarcely had he entered the field when all the towns situated on the Seine and Eure yielded to him, and he arrived at the gates of Rouen before the astonished English could recover from their amazement.

The latter, commanded by the Duke of Somerset, and the celebrated warrior Talbot, endeavoured to resist; but the inhabitants of the town had treated with Dunois, and, joining the

king's troops, the duke found himself so closely pressed that he was obliged to capitulate, and to give up the old palace and castle of Rouen, Honfleur, Arques, Caudebec, Tancarville, Lillebonne, and Montivilliers; to give freedom to the captives he had taken, to engage himself to pay in the course of a year fifty thousand crowns of gold, and to leave for hostages the gallant Talbot and six other English captains.

On these conditions Somerset and his duchess and family, and the whole of the garrison, with all their baggage except the heavy artillery, were permitted to retire with a safe-conduct.

Harfleur, the first conquest of Henry V., the duke refused to surrender, and the French king allowed it to remain, for the moment, in the hands of the English.

The great day of triumph was arrived, and Charles, the "Roi de Bourges," came in pomp and exultation, with all his court and all his army, to take possession of Rouen. To the generous argentier this achievement was mainly owing, and the king resolved that he should bear a conspicuous part in the solemn ceremony of his entrance. The chronicler Berry, king-at-arms, thus recounts the circumstances:—

"On the 10th of November, 1449, the king set forth from St. Catherine to enter his city of Rouen. He was accompanied by the King of Sicily, the Counts of St. Pol and Nevers, the

Counts of Maine and Clermont, the grand equerry Poton de Saintrailles, Juvenal des Ursins the chancellor of France, all magnificently habited, mounted, and equipped. Behind the king came on horseback the archbishop of the city, accompanied by several bishops, abbés, and other churchmen. After them followed the Count de Dunois, lieutenant-general, mounted on a charger covered with crimson velvet, with a large white cross. He wore a dress of the same colour, trimmed with fine sables, having on his head a hat of black velvet, and a sword by his side adorned with gold and precious stones, one ruby on the handle being worth twenty thousand crowns."

Jacques Cœur, the argentier of the king, is named as riding with Dunois, together with De Brezé, Seigneur de la Varenne* and seneschal of Poitou, and the Seigneur de Gaucourt, first chamberlain. These are described as wearing the same dresses as Dunois, and the caparisons of their horses as being similar, namely, covered with crimson satin, embroidered with fine gold and silk, except that the trappings of the argentier's horse were adorned with the white cross, which the two other companions did not bear.

This last circumstance is worthy of note, as it has been advanced against Jacques Cœur, that, "so

* The same De Brezé who was afterwards accused, as well as Jacques Cœur, of crimes against the king.

great was his presumption, and the splendour he assumed, desiring to eclipse the most illustrious chiefs in the richness of his apparel, that he entered Rouen by the side of Dunois, wearing a tunic and arms similar to that worn by the distinguished warrior," as if he had no right so to do.

Both Du Clerq, Berry, and De Coussy mention that he was attired like, and rode by, Dunois; but it was clearly no assumption on his part, for, as had been said, two others were in a similar habit, all of whom, of course, were directed so to appear by order of the king; for there had been much consultation beforehand as to the order and the costume to be adopted on this important occasion, when all the splendour that the money of Jacques Cœur could provide was exhibited, to shine in the eyes of the expectant citizens. Every knight vied with his fellow in magnificent array, and no cost was spared to render the grand entry of the king as imposing as possible.

The Seigneur de la Fayette, marshal of France, was attired in tan-coloured satin, while the baillie de Rouen appeared in blue velvet. The chancellor, Guillaume Juvenal des Ursins, was mounted on a white hackney, wearing a robe, mantle, and cap of scarlet, royally furred, before whom men on foot led an Irish hobby, bearing a lady's saddle covered with velvet sprinkled with gold fleurs-de-lis, and on this hobby was a small coffer with golden bands, which was about a

foot long, or thereabouts, and held the king's seals.

On this occasion a child, son of the Seigneur de Pressigny, aged about thirteen, was created a knight by the hand of the seneschal of Poitou.

"There rode," says De Coussy, "after the chancellor, Jean de Fonteuil, squire of squires, and captain of Laon, who carried in a scarf a mantle of purple-scarlet, furred with ermine, which was the mantle of the king; and he had on his head a hat, pointed before, of vermilion velvet; and the hangings of his horse were also of velvet.

"Poton de Saintrailles, one of the heroes of the day, first squire of the squires of the king, and baillie de Berry, was mounted on a large destrier, covered with azure velvet, fastened with great clasps of silver gilt, armed all in white, and bearing in a scarf the sword of state of the king, the pommel and cross of which were of gold, and the belt and scabbard strewn with fleurs-de-lis of gold on blue velvet."

Then came the king himself, the long-struggling and now triumphant prince, Charles le Victorieux, mounted on a palfrey of middling size, covered with a cloth of azure strewn with golden fleurs-de-lis, armed at all points, says the chronicle, "exceptées la salade et bannière; et si avoit sur son chef un chapeau de bièvre (castor) gris, fourré de satin vermeil, avec une houppette dessus de fil d'or et de soye, et sur le devant estoit

un petit fremail, sur lequel il y avoit un fort beau et riche diamant."

The King of Sicily was dressed in a "journade" or cassock of cloth of gold, very rich, over his armour, which bore *the white cross*, evidently a mark of peculiar distinction: four footmen ran before him. Close to him was his brother, Charles of Anjou, similarly attired and attended.

Charles Count of Nevers, mounted on a bay charger, was in green velvet, embroidered with large letters worked in gold thread, and with fringes of white and vermilion silk: four pages, richly dressed, and twelve gentlemen attended him, their horses covered with vermilion taffety, with a white cross thereon.

The Comte de Tancarville's robes were crimson, thickly embroidered with goldsmiths' work: with him was the Seigneur de Montgascon, in violet velvet.

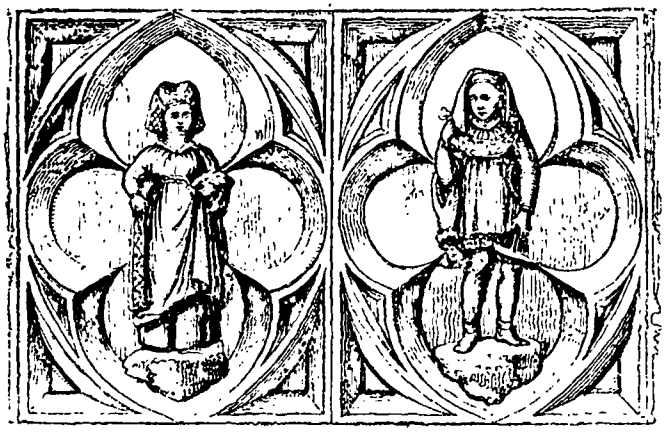
The Count de Clermont's robes were embroidered in gold letters; and his three pages were covered with rich golden ornaments and embroidery, as well as the twenty gentlemen who accompanied him: with him rode Messire Jacques de Chabannes.

Louis de Luxembourg, Count de St. Pol, a celebrated warrior, was mounted on a mottled steed, with blue housings, charged with goldsmiths' work and fringes of gold and silk. His suite was numerous and rich, and behind him

came two men-at-arms bearing lances, one covered with cloth of gold, and one with violet velvet; on his head he wore a chaperon of cut satin, furred with minever.

All that followed were equally splendid in their attire; and never did a King of France enter a city in such state, as did King Charles his rescued city of Rouen.

To maintain the conquest won by Charles VII., great means were necessary, and again the purse of Jacques Cœur was opened; besides which, he exerted all his energy and knowledge to obtain other sums in the country for his master's use. Together with the treasurer of France, the Sire Hardouin, he made immense efforts to supply funds for the urgent calls of the army; "the which," says Jean Chartier, "redounded much to the honour of both, who had contributed, each in his place, to the good service of the king."



CHAPTER XXI.

WAYS AND MEANS.—CHIVALRY.—THE FAIR PILGRIM.—
THE KNIGHT OF BEAU JARDIN.

ONE of the methods of Jacques Cœur, while argentier, to procure money for the king's expenditure, was the following.

Bouchet accompanies his relation of the fact by this remark: "He served the king well in all his affairs and necessities, for which his reward was exile."

"It is said that he found, having used careful research in aid of the finances, that in the kingdom of France were seventeen hundred thousand belfries, taking one in every town, whence he retrenched, allowing for those towns which were ruined seven hundred thousand, leaving a million of belfries. Thus, by taking, one with the other,

twenty livres tournois a year for aids, taxes, &c., a sum would be produced every year of twenty millions, which could be employed in the following manner:—.

"First, for the expense of the king's hotel each day, a thousand livres tournois, which is, yearly, three hundred and sixty-five thousand livres tournois. The same for the expense of the hotel of the queen and her ladies, and the same for the expense of the children in the same.

"To keep up the repair of towns, fortresses, and castles of the kingdom, every year, one million.

"For the wages of twenty thousand men-at-arms, as well in winter as in summer, for each man-at-arms, one with the other, thirty livres a month, which amounts in the year to seven millions two hundred thousand livres tournois.

"For the pay of the officers, a million a year.

"For gifts to knights, squires, and others, for their rewards and services, one million a year.

"For gifts to strangers, as ambassadors and other persons engaged on public business, one million.

"For engines of war, three hundred thousand livres a year.

"For the maintenance of persons at sea, two millions: making in all fourteen millions five hundred and eighty-five thousand livres tournois.

"Out of this there will remain to the king, to put by, or to augment the number of his

soldiers, five millions four hundred and fifteen thousand livres a year."

Just at this period a chivalrous spirit was abroad, and many knights, impatient to distinguish themselves during the truce between England and France, to fill up their time in a manner congenial to their warlike habits, sought private occasions to distinguish themselves. Amongst these, the historian Mathieu de Coussy gives an account of an adventure which is very remarkable, as showing the customs of the day.

There had been an announcement from Rome, that in the year 1450, at Christmas, would begin a series of pardons. This news spread throughout Christendom, and a general enthusiasm prevailed, so that the high-roads were crowded with pious pilgrims on their way to the Holy City, where such extraordinary advantages were to be attained.

It is recounted, that Pope Nicolas was so besieged in his palace and in the church of Saint Peter, that he was almost overcome, oppressed by the rudeness and zealous perseverance of those who clamoured and crowded for his blessing. The streets of Rome were so filled with pilgrims, that many fatal accidents continually happened from the press; one in particular severely shocked the good Pope, who lamented the untoward event with many tears. It appears

that the crowd had become so dense at the end of the bridge of St. Angelo, that ninety-seven persons were crushed to death. However, as the Pope ordered a solemn mass to be said for their souls, their fate was probably considered rather a happy than a dolorous event. Certain it is, that the visit to Rome at this time was looked forward to with enthusiasm, and amongst other candidates for the offered pardon was a lady, who caused herself to be proclaimed as La belle Pélerine, and is described as a noble personage, "adorned and furnished with much gracious and courteous language."

This lady wrote letters, which she despatched into divers kingdoms, relating her intention of making a pilgrimage to Rome, accompanied by a valiant knight, who had offered her his protection on the journey.

There is a good deal of mystery about this fair pilgrim, whose name does not transpire in the course of the narrative of De Coussy, and her knight had also concealed his name, which was, however, afterwards discovered.

The story she tells in her official letters to the powers of Europe is to this effect:—

That, having long resolved to avail herself of so happy an opportunity as obtaining a pardon at Rome, she had departed from her own country, and set forth on her way in humble guise, prepared to meet all the hardships and

difficulties which might assail her, travelling by slow stages, and visiting as she went all the holy places she found in her path.

"I had," says she, "gone on in this manner for some time, when fortune led me near to the sea-shore, at the end of a high forest, very tangled and dangerous, and there I came to the haunt of certain pillagers and robbers of the sea, who fiercely and frightfully came towards me and those in my company; and I had no other prospect before me, considering their demeanour, but to be taken prisoner or put to death, when by good chance a knight was riding that way, and hearing the outcry, came to the rescue, and so valiantly behaved himself, that he put the robbers to flight and delivered me and my companions from their hands.

"Meanwhile I, who had been much affrighted at the danger, was fallen into a fainting fit on the ground, whence the knight lifted me up, and taking me gently in his arms, said, 'My dear lady, do not longer terrify yourself for anything: take heart and be comforted, for by the mercy of God you are delivered from the power of your enemies; and if it is your pleasure, I am ready to conduct you and your company to some good town or place of safety in the neighbourhood."

"When he had thus spoken," continues this true heroine of romance, whose style was much admired at the time by all the readers of her

singular epistle, "and when I had a little recovered and could speak, I thanked him with a grateful heart for the great courtesy and goodness that he had shewn me. I then began to think very seriously of the peril and danger I was in, considering what a long way I had yet to go to accomplish my pilgrimage, and yet how distressing it would be to me to return to my own country without having done so, on which, bursting into tears, I said to the knight, 'Sir knight, I am the most distressed gentlewoman at present in this world, and I know not at this moment what to do.'

"When he heard me so speak, he replied, very gently, that, if there was anything in which his counsel might avail, or the body of a knight might with honour achieve, he would undertake it to serve me without hesitation."

The lady then proceeds to relate to the knight the pious object which had led her so far on her journey, and, without further circumlocution, asks him boldly, by the pity and compassion which all gentle knights owe to distressed ladies, to be her escort throughout the remainder of the perilous journey which her great devotion had caused her to undertake.

The knight on this considered a little within himself, and then replied, that there was nothing he would willingly refuse her, and would do all in his power to prevent her meeting with either danger or discourtesy on her journey; nevertheless,

it was necessary that she should be informed that he had made a vow, which would prevent his undertaking this or any other enterprise until he had accomplished that to which he was bound.

The vow he had made was to guard a pass in a place near the tour de Beau Jardin, on the road between Calais and St. Omer, in Picardy, in the diocese of Thérouane, called hitherto the Place de Beau Jardin, but henceforth, he gallantly informed the lady, to be named La Croix de la Pélerine. This spot it was his intent to guard from the 15th of July, 1449, till the feast of our Lady in the middle of August, against all comers.

The fair pilgrim, on hearing this, resolves to address letters to all the chief courts of Europe, praying the kings and governors of each to assist her pious purpose, by giving permission to their knights to accept the challenge of the knight of Beau Jardin, who, though it was his pleasure to remain unknown, was yet of high renown and noble lineage.

She urges all persons, who regard their honour and the love of the ladies, to assist her undertaking by encouraging that of the unknown knight, who, she assures them, "has not been induced to this act by hatred or any bad feeling, but to keep in practice the noble art of chivalry, and occupy himself therewith; because, God be praised! at present in these marches there is sufficient repose from war; added to which, he wishes to become

acquainted with the said knights of fame, that he may the more highly value them for the future."

In order that no doubt may be entertained of the respectability of the knight, it is certified by Monseigneur le Comte d'Estampes, that he is known to him, and is a highly worthy personage.

The knight is then described by his fair friend as having established himself at the Croix de la Pélerine, where he has hung up a white shield with a bend gules, such as was formerly borne by that loyal and fortunate knight Lancelot du Lac; and beside the shield is a lance and battle-axe hung on a stake, to which is also a hunting-horn appended.

She now calls him Le Chevalier à la Pélerine, and goes on to set forth all the preparations he has made for his passage of arms in the style of Palamedes, who fought so well in his day for the ladies.

The lady further adds, that to every knight who accepts the challenge she will present "ung *bourdon** d'or garni d'un riche ruby, priant qu'il lui plaise porter toute l'année pour remembrance."

Her letters were despatched by different notable officers of arms in all directions; but it appears the enterprise was not considered with favour, and no enthusiasm followed the announcement of this chivalrous intent.

* A tilting-lance.

Charles VII. by no means encouraged it, as he required the services of all his knights at that moment, and they were aware that there was plenty of occupation in store for them, now that open war had been declared against England.

In Germany one knight answered the appeal, but he was aged, and probably looked with more respect on usages which appear to have been thought somewhat romantic and antiquated even in that day. In Berne, Bernard, bastard of Foix, accepted the challenge.

In Spain, no knight was found to listen to the proposal. In Burgundy, a few came forward, but were forbidden to continue the enterprise by the King of France. In Normandy, the governor Somerset gave no encouragement to the envoys; and everywhere there was the same disappointment.

The chronicler does not conclude his story except by mentioning who the valiant knight was who was thus baulked of his pas d'armes. He was no other than Jéhan de Luxembourg, bâtard de St. Pol, Seigneur de Haubourdin, counsellor and chamberlain to the Duke of Burgundy.

What became of the fair pilgrim is also unexplained; but it is to be presumed that she arrived safely in Rome under the escort of her gallant protector, if he had no other adventure on hand to detain him.

CHAPTER XXII.

HARFLEUR. — REVERSES. — DEATH OF AGNES SOREL. — ACCUSATION. — JACQUES CŒUR'S FAMILY. — INGRATITUDE. — THE SENESCHAL. — CHARLOTTE DE FRANCE. — MARRIETTE.

CHARLES, pursuing his success, now determined to attack Harfleur, and it was here that he exhibited a personal courage which ranked him with the first warriors of his time. He fought in the trenches like a private soldier, exposing himself to all the dangers of the attack. Unable to resist so resolute a body of men, the English were forced to surrender; and the king went on towards Caen, with the intention of taking that city in person. At both of these attacks Jacques Cœur accompanied his master, whether as a counsellor or a warrior, history has not recorded.

A violent struggle took place for Caen, and after a tremendous loss the English were defeated. Cherbourg alone now remained in the hands of the islanders, and vigorously and promptly attacked, was carried like the rest after

useless resistance, and the English lost the last place they had called their own in France. One year had sufficed for all these successes, and Charles VII. was now indeed King of France.

During the whole period of this conquest all those employed in the service of the king were scrupulously paid every month with the money that the generous merchant had advanced for the service of his country.

But, as the old ballad has it,

> Every white will have its black,
> And every sweet its sour.

Charles VII. had reached the height of his ambition; his foes had fled before him, and were driven into the sea, which henceforth should divide them from his restored kingdom. He was surrounded with faithful friends and brave warriors, and the prospect of the future was all sunshine and hope. But a dark cloud was sailing over the sky, and it paused before the star which was brightest in the firmament, extinguishing the light which had led forward the adventurous prince in all his undertakings.

It has been already related how Agnes Sorel, from her retirement at one of her castles, had sought her royal lover at the abbey of Jumièges: her presence was unexpected, and one reason of her sudden appearance is given by historians in her design of warning Charles that a conspiracy

was on foot against him, which she had discovered.

The anxiety for his safety alone might, however, have induced the Dame de Beauté to seek him at this moment, or her enthusiastic participation in his glory might urge her to fly to congratulate him. It is possible that her presence was not desired by Jacques Cœur, who seemed always fearful of his royal friend's weakness; and, although Agnes was a patriot and a woman of sense, yet she was fond of luxury and expense, and was far from discouraging her lover in his disposition to extravagance.

It is said that Agnes had become jealous of the influence of the argentier, and that she sought Charles at this time, in the hope of re-animating a passion which she feared was fading in the brighter beams of the flood of glory which now environed him.

Be this as it may, she was attacked with fever immediately after an interview with the king, when she had retired to a château she possessed, called du Manoir, near Jumièges, and death put at once an end to the fears of some, the jealousies of others, and the love of one who for many years had found his chief happiness in her society.

It would seem difficult to any but the most malignant mind, out of the death of a person with whom he was known to have lived in amity, and who had named him to a post of honour in her

last will, to imagine and concoct crime and accusation against Jacques Cœur; yet even from those very circumstances which should have prevented such suspicions as were thrown upon him, arose the wrong which annihilated his fortunes.

The great object with those who envied and dreaded Jacques Cœur was to undermine him in the affection of the king. While Agnes lived, her superior mind probably directed him in many matters, and she had too much observation not to see that the friendship and devotion of the argentier were sincere and valuable. But Jacques Cœur had now lost his advocate, if indeed, till now, he ever required one; and the king, tired of exertion, and secure in his possessions, gave way to that indolence of mind which was habitual to him, and which he had thrown off only at the urgent entreaty of others, jealous of his honour and anxious for the regeneration of their country.

It is, nevertheless, inexplicable, that Charles VII., even at the very moment of a triumph which he owed to the aid of his friend, should cast him off and abandon him to the hatred and fury of his enemies without a struggle. Yet so it was; and the high position of the noble merchant once lost, he permitted him to be dragged from the throne to a dungeon, with as little remorse as if he had been a recent favourite whose falsehood he had discovered, and whose fate was

as indifferent to him as that of the worthless minion Giac.

The advancement of the family of the great merchant had not been forgotten in his prosperity; and no doubt the high position which it occupied served to increase the hate and jealousy of those who envied him.

His eldest son Jean was now Archbishop of Bourges, and his brother Nicolas was Bishop of Luçon, as well as canon of the Sainte Chapelle of Bourges.

Charles VII. had himself written to Pope Eugene IV., in 1446, recommending Jean Cœur to succeed to the archbishop, who had been dismissed, and the request was granted, although he had scarcely reached the age of twenty-five years.

The prudence and regularity of his conduct proved that a good choice had been made; in fact, there never existed a more worthy and exemplary prelate than Jean. Together with his other virtues, he possessed a fund of liberality; and there was not a single church in his diocese that he did not adorn, repair, and enlarge. He was abbé of St. Sulpicede Bourges, and his liberal donations there were very extensive for reparations.

He had, says a monk who has written his life, a cell contiguous to the other cells of the monastery, and in the same dormitory. The archbishop frequently retired thither to meditate alone in

this holy solitude, and to repose from the cares of his diocese.

During his prelacy the city of Bourges was afflicted with a grievous pestilence. The archbishop mounted the pulpit, and exhorted his people to disarm the wrath of God by their prayers, that He might stay this terrible malady. His pathetic words occasioned the vow made by the mayor and magistrates on the 13th July, 1458, to celebrate for ever in future the fête of the Visitation by a solemn procession, in which all the dignitaries of the town assisted *in their robes.* It is to be hoped that some more substantial good resulted to the town than this latter circumstance, which seems, however, greatly to have impressed the mind of the reverend historian.

It was in his quality of patriarch that Jean Cœur accompanied, from Paris to St. Denis, the body of Charles VII., and that he read the service at his funeral; for the archbishopric of Bourges involved great dignities and privileges, Bourges being considered the capital of the kingdom of Aquitaine. He held the first place by virtue of his ecclesiastical dignity, when the conclusion of the pragmatic sanction took place at Bourges.

He was one of the chief promoters of the restoration of the university of the city, re-established by Paul II. in 1464. It appears by the documents of the church, that he died in his native town the 29th of June, 1482.

The other children of Jacques Cœur and Macée de Léodepart were, a daughter, Perrette, who married Jacques Trousseau, whose father was seigneur de Mareuil and de Sainte Palaye.*

Henry was the dean of the church of Limoges and canon of the metropolitan and Saint Chapelle at Bourges.

Of Renaud nothing is known.

Geoffrey Cœur was lord of La Chaussée, and married in 1463 Isabelle Bureau, daughter of Jean Bureau, Baron of Montglat, grand master of the artillery of France. His father's death had happened ten years before this; and it is one of the proofs of the estimation in which his memory was held, that the alliance of his son was sought by a man who, like Bureau, had known him well.

Geoffrey became maître d'hôtel to Louis XI., who honoured him with the title of knight, in consideration of his services and those of his father. He died in Paris, and was buried in the chapel called Des Bons Enfans, near the cloister of St. Honoré.

It would seem that the re-establishment of Charles VII. on his throne was the signal, not of exhibiting the gratitude owing by himself and his court to those who had served him in their necessities, but of endeavouring, by accusations and charges of dishonesty, to get rid of all the

* See Appendix.

obligations which weighed heavily on persons who might at length be expected to show some return for the devotion of faithful friends.

Plots were got up by the needy courtiers against the rich, in the hope that the wealth they coveted would be transferred to their empty purses; and if a case of dishonesty could be proved, they flattered themselves that there would be no fear of restitution being ever demanded.

Amongst those who suffered from these designs was Pierre de Brezé, seneschal of Poitou, against whom, as Mathieu de Coussy relates, there arose "great hates from several high lords of France, both of the blood-royal and others."

De Brezé had long been entrusted with the government of the king's affairs, and had the chief charge of the general welfare of the kingdom. His power was great and his wealth considerable, and he was looked upon as one of the most important of the king's servants; Charles himself holding him in high favour, and trusting him as he did his argentier, who was already marked out as a victim when the proper time should arrive.

In this case, however, one of the principal enemies of the man intended as a sacrifice was the Dauphin Louis, at this time in Dauphiné, disgraced, and little better than an exile. Although it was his own act to quit his father's

court, yet, when he found that by doing so he had lost all his influence, and was considered as an outcast, all the bad passions of his nature took their course, and, impoverished and mortified, he eagerly listened to any evil suggestion which he thought would redeem his fortunes by another's downfall.

He accordingly came forward with charges of the blackest character against De Brezé, accusing him of having sacrificed the interests of the king to enrich himself, and of having deceived and injured numerous lords of the council who had confided in him. This he offered to prove by undeniable evidence, and declared himself resolved to bring the culprit to justice.

The amazement of the seneschal when he found himself thus attacked was extreme, and he was startled to find that many of those who, during his prosperous career, had appeared to be his sincerest friends, were now his declared persecutors.

He, however, re-assured himself as he best might, and resolved to resist the injustice which threatened to overwhelm him. He saw that this was the time, if ever, to show his wisdom and his courage, and he at once appealed to the king, demanding that his accusers should be confronted with him, and that he should be allowed every advantage which the law could give to enable him to refute their charges.

He offered to give himself up to the king, to constitute himself a prisoner whenever Charles should command, to be at the whole expense of his own trial, and to meet any of the persons who accused him without reserve.

All this the king readily agreed to, for, it seems, he was no party to this plot, but regretted the attack on his seneschal, to whom he was much attached. He was still entirely confident of his servant's probity and honour; but, says the chronicler, "he was very fearful, and always exceedingly apprehensive of the envy of his court; and well he might, for he had seen great troubles and inconveniences arise amongst those who served him, to his great displeasure and prejudice." He referred, then, this cause to the court of Parliament, and it was pleaded and carried on for a long space of time, during which De Brezé was deprived of his governments and appointments, not one of all his commands being left him, and all this while it was yet undecided whether he were guilty or innocent.

After a series of the most distressing persecutions, and all sorts of criminal accusations, which were brought forward in the hope of crushing him, he contrived to obtain a triumph, and was finally pronounced free of all these malicious charges. Nevertheless, though the king acknowledged himself perfectly contented, he was too timid to re-establish his friend on the same foot-

ing as before, and the power and influence of De Brezé were, in a great measure, at an end, even when some of his governments were restored to him.

That Charles himself was satisfied of his purity, is evident by the alliance he afterwards formed with him, marrying one of his natural daughters, Charlotte de France, who is said to have been the child of La belle Agnès, to Jacques de Brezé, Count de Maulévrier, who succeeded his father as seneschal of Normandy, and who possessed very considerable property and numerous estates.

The history attached to this marriage is very tragical, and presents a frightful picture of the times, when the law could be taken into the hands of an individual who conceived himself aggrieved.

It appears that the Count de Maulévrier was of a morose and sullen disposition, and a domestic tyrant. He had conceived jealousy of his beautiful young wife Charlotte, already the mother of his heir and two more children: he kept her away from court at one of his castles, and one fatal day she accompanied him on a hunting party, on their return from which every one retired to their respective chambers.

Some designing friend took this opportunity of informing De Brezé that his wife was closeted with his chief huntsman, Pierre de la Vergne, and

that his honour was endangered by such interviews, which had taken place more than once.

De Brezé, in the height of his passion, rushed to his wife's apartment, and, breaking the door open, it is said discovered his servant there with the countess. Appearances being thus against her, and her husband too furious to hear explanations, Charlotte, in terror, rushed to hide herself in the bed where her children were asleep, while her enraged husband struck La Vergne dead at his feet, without a moment's question. He then proceeded to drag his wife from her concealment, who clung to her infants for protection; she struggled with him, and had fallen on her knees imploring his mercy, when he plunged his sword in her bosom, and she fell dead on the floor.

The vengeance of the supposed injured husband being accomplished, he caused it to be given out that Charlotte had died suddenly, and made a magnificent funeral for her, erecting a monument to her memory, in which her conjugal virtues are set forth with great pomp. In this tomb he afterwards directed to be himself buried: he had therefore, soon after his crime, probably discovered that his wife was innocent, or it is hardly likely that he would have desired to be buried by her side.

She was the mother of that Louis de Brezé whose wife was the famous Diana de Poitiers.

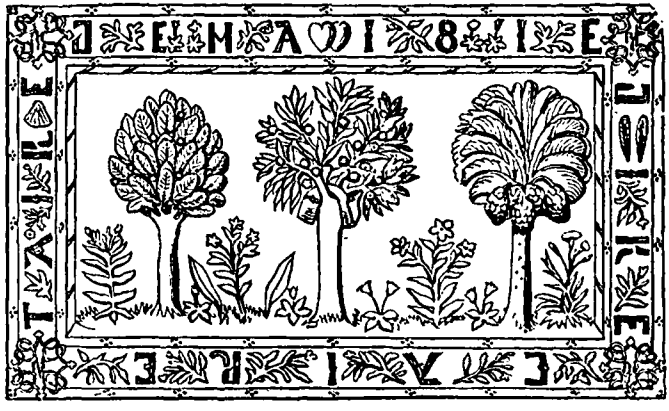
Certain it is, that the latter is represented sharing his superb monument in the cathedral of Rouen, and appearing in the character of a disconsolate mourner beside his tomb.

One victim had eluded the restless enemies of order and quiet, and it seemed necessary that another, less able to defend himself, should be produced, in order to prove the zeal of the party for the royal interest, and to show that such charges as they had brought were not altogether chimerical. Accordingly, they fixed upon one of the king's secretaries, Master William Mariette, and insisted upon the fact of his being guilty of enormous crimes and malefactions. The king, willing to atone for the part he had taken in the defence of De Brezé, at once gave way in this instance, and Mariette was thrown into the prison of Tours, and from thence brought to Paris for examination, where he underwent all kinds of interrogatories, doubtless accompanied by the torture, till he was induced to make a confession, whether true or false, of having cheated the king, of counterfeiting his seal and that of the dauphin, of having issued letters of credit in the royal name, addressed to several noblemen, from whom he had thus obtained supplies which he appropriated; of having invented falsehoods in order to create discord amongst the princes and nobles of the land; in chief, having thus deceived Duke Philippe of Burgundy, heads

of the county of Liege, and many others; in fact, of having possessed himself of money in all ways but those of honest dealing.

All this being established, the wretched man was taken back to Tours and there executed, with infinite cruelty, for the edification of the public.

But there was more exalted game which these illustrious conspirators of the purse pursued, and the hour was approaching when their vigilance would be rewarded with full success.



CHAPTER XXIII.

HEIGHT OF WEALTH.— ST. FARGEAU.— XAINCOINS.— DAUPHIN. —THE KING'S FAITH SHAKEN.—OTTO CASTELLANI.—DE CHABANNES.

ARRIVED at the greatest distinction, possessed of almost unlimited power, the argentier had no inclination to relax his efforts to render himself the richest commoner in the kingdom. Perhaps, surrounded as he was by impoverished men of rank, he felt that his greatest security was in his wealth, which kept those turbulent companions in his power, for not one of them but was deeply in his debt; and, again, as they were little in a condition to repay what they owed, he must have seen the policy of not depending upon their means or their principles of honour, which, except in cases where chivalry was concerned, seldom shone out very brilliantly.

The love of wealth, and consequent power, was no doubt the ruling passion of Jacques Cœur; and though in a general way it scarcely deserves to be considered a noble aim, yet so magnificent and generous was he in the distribution of his gains, that he exalted the nature of his pursuit. Nothing sordid or grovelling found a place in his character: he was great and liberal in all that he did; his objects were patriotic and benevolent, and he traded like a monarch rather than a merchant. His views were far beyond the mere accumulation of money, and his ambition was to do good by means of his great possessions.

That he did not disdain dignities, appears from the acquisition of property which he made: no less than forty estates called him master; that of St. Fargeau alone containing more than twenty-two parishes.

It was the lordship of this estate which drew upon him the envenomed jealousy which effected his ruin in the end. It would have been better policy in the rich merchant to forego the acquisition of a coveted domain, which fell to him in consequence of the poverty of one of higher birth than himself.

George de la Trémouille, a man of high lineage and powerful at the court, had entered into negotiations with the Marquis of Montferrat for the purchase of the lands of Toucy, Puisaie,

Douay, and St. Fargeau, for 20,000 gold crowns; but being unable to pay the sum agreed upon, the estates were offered to Jacques Cœur, who immediately paid down the whole sum and became lord of all.

The castle of St. Fargeau* was of very ancient construction, founded, in fact, in 998, by Heribert, Bishop of Auxerre, natural brother of Hugues Capet; and the castle of Toucy was of equal antiquity and importance. It was mortifying to a noble of great family to see such estates pass into the hands of a man of the people; and the lord of La Trémouille considered his rights infringed, and himself personally insulted, by the purchase of Jacques Cœur. He caused proceedings to be instituted in defence of what he considered his rights; and when the law decided in favour of the wealthy merchant, he insisted that he had procured the decision by undue influence.

Retiring in disgust from the contest, La Trémouille vowed in the depth of his heart that the upstart millionaire should repent his daring; and he never allowed his vengeance to slumber, till he had gained a signal triumph over a man who had injured him in nothing.

With boundless riches at his command, enjoying the intimate affection of his royal master,

* The little town of St. Fargeau, on the river Loing, two leagues from its source, is the capital of La Puisaie.

surrounded by a flourishing family, and in possession of magnificent estates; with palaces rising wherever he chose to build them, with successful commerce continually doubling his enormous means, Jacques Cœur was now at the utmost height of worldly power and enjoyment. There was much yet left for him to do to help his prostrate country; but

> His bounty was as boundless as the sea,
> His love as deep. The more he gave,
> The more he had; for both were infinite.

If he indulged in the luxury which his great wealth brought to his feet, he can scarcely be blamed for taking the good the gods provided, for it is not on record, even from the report of his enemies, that at any period of his brilliant career he neglected the interests of either his king or his country. But envy and hatred were at work to undermine him, even at the very top of his full-blown prosperity. So strong was he in integrity as well as power, that caution was necessary in attacking him, and the first blow fell on one of those employed under him in the administration of the king's affairs.

The receiver-general at that period was a Florentine named Jean Xaincoins, whose wealth was so great and manner of living so magnificent, that it was little beneath that of the grand argentier himself, and excited suspi-

cions that he could scarcely have won such enormous possessions honestly.

A party, anxious to institute inquiry, and watching for the propitious moment when, suspicion of those in power once awakened, further attempts might be ventured, accused Xaincoins of peculation: he was arrested, tried, tortured, and condemned to death, to the amazement of the greatest part of the lookers-on, who trembled as they beheld how far resolute enmity would proceed.

If Xaincoins were indeed guilty, he deserved condign punishment; but if not, the leniency of the king in granting him his life, and taking possession of sixty thousand crowns of gold, which he was condemned to pay, was not sufficient. Guilty or innocent, the unfortunate receiver-general was ruined, and his coffers emptied into the royal treasury, while his enemies secretly whispered, that the great and rich parvenu Jacques Cœur knew more of his proceedings than was worthy of the confidence reposed in him.

But this was merely a preliminary step, undertaken with a view to familiarise men's minds with accusation, and prepare them for the great attempt which a powerful body, working in secret, were getting ready for the destruction of the richest subject in the kingdom.

The conduct of the dauphin greatly irritated the king, and it was thought a safe plan to in-

sinuate to the latter that Jacques Cœur had more intelligence with him than was consistent with his professed devotion to his master. Several noblemen, who were foes of the argentier, boldly accused him to Charles of having given both counsel and money to the revolted prince, and represented that he knew his interest was likely to be better secured by paying court to the rising than the setting sun.

Unlikely as was this assertion, the startled monarch, whose besetting weakness was terror of his son, a weakness which cost him his life in the end, listened to the fatal insinuation; and though he might have exclaimed in his heart, like the British monarch of romance, who thought himself betrayed,

> O God! whom may we ever trust,
> When such a knight so false can be?

yet he shuddered as he heard the words which attributed such baseness to the man in whom he had so long confided. Alas! who were the accusers? had they been more zealous, more devoted, more useful, or more disinterested than Jacques Cœur? No; but they were persons of high rank, of his own class, and their authority was felt by him.

Some of the highest names of France are to be found amongst the accusers of the argentier, and all were deeply his debtors for sums which

they had neither the hope nor the wish to pay, but which they trusted to be relieved from discharging by his disgrace.

Added to this conspiracy at his very hearth, there was no want of foreign enemies, who waited but an occasion to overwhelm him with their treachery. From the merchants of Genoa, Venice, and Tuscany, Jacques Cœur had wrested the monopoly of the Levant trade, and greatly reduced their profits. Numerous French merchants also felt their inferiority to him, and writhed under the infliction of his successes, not beholding, in their short-sightedness, that it was to him they owed the great extension of commerce, which had placed them, as well as himself, in so flourishing a position. They merely cared to know that his downfall would leave a gap which any one of them might be fortunate enough to fill; and the thought of his failure rejoiced their envious hearts.

A willing agent of mischief was easily found in the person of Otto Castellani, a Florentine, who was treasurer of Toulouse, and receiver of customs for the court of Parliament in that town. He was the declared enemy of Jacques Cœur, and his ambition had long been to supplant him in his high appointment at the head of the finances of the kingdom. His views were in the end accomplished, and his punishment followed, though it was scarcely adequate to his crime. M. Bon-

amy informs us, that Otto or Othon Castellan or Chastelain had made his fortune in France, where he had established himself. In 1446 he had a lawsuit against Marie d'Anjou, wife of Charles VII.; nevertheless he was made treasurer of Toulouse while Jacques Cœur was still in favour; perhaps, indeed, he owed his place to him.

Otto Castellani was a creature of Antoine de Chabannes, Count de Dammartin, a warrior, a man of rank, a patriot, and a hero, but unprincipled, revengeful, proud, cruel, and ungrateful. The terror of his name was spread, not only as a leader of a holy cause in which he fought by the side of the heroine of Orleans, but as a captain of écorcheurs, whose fell deeds made humanity shudder. He had revolted from his king and joined the rebellious dauphin in the conspiracy of the Praguerie, but had returned to his allegiance like Dunois and La Trémouille, and been forgiven as they were. It was through a fit of ungoverned fury that he deserted the cause of Charles, who having one day saluted him derisively with the title of "captain of the écorcheurs,"* he had replied indignantly, "I have been so only to your enemies, and methinks their *skins* have brought more profit to you than to me."

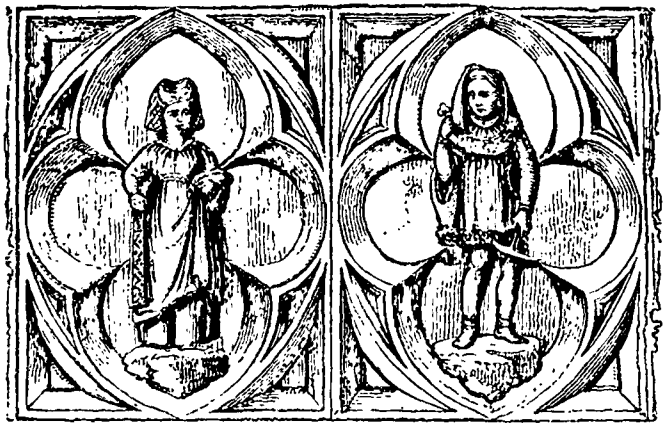
At a later period, when he was applied to by the dauphin to join him in a new conspiracy

* Or skinners.

against Charles, he went at once to the king and revealed the plot; and being confronted with Louis, having received the lie from him, he boldly declared that he was ready to maintain the truth of his accusation with arms in his hand against any of the dauphin's people who dared to deny the charge.

So much boldness and valour were worthy of a better cause than that in which De Chabannes engaged when he placed himself in the lists of the most bitter hatred against his creditor, and a man who had injured him only by superior virtue and that superior wealth which had enabled him to be a benefactor to the ungrateful class who could not brook obligation from an inferior in birth.

Passionate and energetic in all things, De Chabannes had given up his mind entirely for years to the object of destroying Jacques Cœur, and he had secretly been working at the mine which was to burst and overwhelm him. It was his voice that first dared to lift itself up against an innocent man, and, in the character of his master's champion, to accuse the argentier of treason.



CHAPTER XXIV.

LOANS TO THE DAUPHIN.—MISSION TO LAUSANNE.—JACQUES CŒUR'S MAGNIFICENCE.—ARREST.—JEANNE DE VENDOME.—A DUNGEON.—THE JUDGMENT.

THAT Charles VII., however he might have been impressed with the accusation against Jacques Cœur of conspiring with the dauphin, did not continue to credit it, is plainly proved by the fact, that, neither in the public charge against him, nor in the pronounced judgment is a word, hinting at such a suspicion, inserted.

It is by no means unlikely, nor does the fact involve any blame to the argentier, that he occasionally supplied the dauphin with money to meet his expenses: the poverty of his father considered, and the natural extravagance of a young prince, make it extremely natural that he should,

when at the court, solicit aid from the same fruitful source which sent forth its bounties to every nobleman there; and nothing could be less extraordinary than that Louis should have been indebted to Jacques Cœur in common with every other person, high and low, who required and procured money from the general banker.

His continual occupation in public affairs of the utmost importance, besides his own extensive commercial relations, must have employed so entirely the time of the minister and ambassador, that there was no pause in which he could have had leisure, even if he had had inclination, for plots and conspiracies; and, as none knew so well as he the state of the finances, and no one had so much control over them, there was no reason why he should betray a long-cherished friend for an insolent and undutiful prince, to whom he was bound by no ties whatever. The absurdity of this charge ought, at once, to have annihilated all others; but, though that fell to the ground, others equally monstrous and improbable were persevered in and attended to.

It has been thought that it was during the absence of Jacques Cœur on his mission to Lausanne, that his enemies succeeded in undermining the king's regard and confidence in him. If it were so, Charles dissimulated well, for the favour in which his faithful servant appeared after this was greater than ever, and his gratitude for his

eminent services was as lively as it had been accustomed to appear for years.

After the conquest of Normandy, the king, now indeed master of his own kingdom, set no bounds to his expressions of gratitude to his generous friend, who felt secure in his unshaken affection, and happy in the success of all his patriotic hopes.

There was time now for enjoyment, and Jacques Cœur, who had learned in the East and in Italy how to surround himself with the luxuries which his great wealth made easy to him, began to feel that a tranquil life might yet be his own. His name was honoured by foreign nations, and stood almost the highest in his own. His family were advanced in dignity, his children affectionate and dutiful, his wife tender and devoted; the pope, Nicholas V., was his personal friend, and he saw no end to his resources.

Much has been said of the magnificence of his mode of living; that his table was served with splendour equal to that of royalty, and no vessels were seen in his house that were not made of silver; it is even asserted that his very horses were shod with silver, and his luxury knew no bounds. All this may be true, and there is no reason why he should be blamed if it were so: the blame rests on his enemies, who envied his wealth and his happiness, and sought to destroy that of which they could not obtain possession.

But a storm was gathering in silence, which

was to burst on the devoted head of this illustrious victim of malice: an abyss was yawning at his feet, into which the hands of successful foes were to cast him. At length the tempest broke loose, and its explosion was heard not only from one extremity of France to the other, but throughout Europe. It was proclaimed that the king had given orders for the arrest and imprisonment of his argentier.

"Now comes," says one of his biographers, "the development to our eyes of a great drama, which, while the victim is overwhelmed, makes manifest his glory and the shame of his vanquishers." If on one hand we behold *the court vultures*, as La Thaumassière calls them, prompt to pounce upon a rich man in the hope of sharing the spoils of his ruin, on the other are disclosed, as his defenders, supporters, and consolers, generous and devoted dependants and factors, conscientious churchmen, and the august head of the Catholic religion himself.

Alas! that a woman, one of a sex which is in general distinguished for every noble, self-denying, and liberal quality, should be the instrument of treachery chosen for this diabolical machination. A woman there was who could lend herself to so vile a purpose, and she was one of the chief debtors of the rich merchant, as well as her husband.

Jeanne de Vendôme, born of an illustrious house, had married François de Montberon, lord

of Montagne-sur-Gironde, and had been largely indebted for many years to Jacques Cœur. She belonged to the party who had vowed his destruction, and she consented to assist in bringing about the consummation so much desired. It was from her mouth that issued an accusation, which it was hoped would obtain more credence than that which implicated the dauphin. She formally stated that Agnès Sorel had died in consequence of poison administered to her by the hand of the man whom she had named in her will as her executor.

Jacques Cœur was at the castle of Taillebourg with the king, enjoying, as he supposed, the favour and affection of his sovereign, and quite unsuspicious of evil, when, on the 31st of July, 1451, he was suddenly seized, arrested, and cast into prison, on a charge which he had scarcely time to hear, and to which he did not deign to reply.

A dungeon in the castle of Taillebourg received him; and before any judicial proceedings had taken place, before any sentence was passed, all his possessions were seized and given into the hand of the king!

His jailors were his accusers, his judges were his debtors and enemies, and he was given over at once to rivals and adversaries, as a sacrifice and a victim, by that prince to whom he had restored a kingdom, and who had mounted his throne by

means of heaps of gold piled up at his feet by the most devoted, faithful, and generous of friends and subjects.

> Why this
> Is the world's soul. Who can call him
> His friend that dips in the same dish?
> Timon has been this lord's father,
> And kept his credit with his purse—
> Supported his estate; nay, Timon's money
> Has paid his men their wages; he ne'er drinks
> But Timon's silver treads upon his lips:
> And yet—oh see the monstrousness of man!
> When he looks out in an ungrateful shape—
> He does deny him in respect of his
> What charitable men afford to beggars!

The principal charges against Jacques Cœur are contained in the following sentence, which is too tedious to give in full, but is briefly set forth, in order that the reader may judge of the frivolousness of the accusations, and the little probability attached to them:—

"Charles, by the grace of God King of France, to all by whom these present letters shall be seen, greeting.—As, after the decease of the late Agnès Sorelle, damoiselle, the common report was that she was poisoned; and, by the same common report, suspicion was entertained of Jacques Cœur, then our counsellor and argentier, and also that he had sent armour to the Saracens, our ancient enemies, and enemies of the Christian faith; and as many of our subjects have made great complaints and clamours of the said Jacques

Cœur, accusing him of having made great extortions and exactions in our province of Languedoc on our subjects, and of having transported, or caused to be transported, to the said Saracens, by his people, factors, and servants, in his vessels, great quantities of silver, so that it was said that our whole province of Languedoc was emptied of its treasure: We did therefore order informations to be laid on the subject of the death by poison of the said Damoiselle Agnès, and reports to be made to us in our castle of Taillebourg, where we were staying for the conquest of our duchy of Guienne, and caused the charges to be seen and visited by those of our Grand Council, and many others of our people and officers called together in great numbers for this purpose, and caused these informations to be seen and visited at great length, as also the deposition of Jeanne de Vendôme, damoiselle, Dame de Montagne, who touching the case of the said death and poisoning of the said Agnès had deposed against the said Jacques Cœur. By the advice, and after the deliberations of our said Grand Council and others aforesaid, we did order and appoint that Jacques Cœur should be arrested, his goods put into our hands by inventory, and in the guardianship of certain commissioners, who shall render an account of them, wherever and whatever they may be.

"Since which our appointment, and immedi-

ately after and before the execution of the said decree, Jacques was brought before us in the presence of our Council assembled, and there he represented that he had been arrested by our servants, and had heard that certain proceedings had been instituted against him, and required of us that it would please us to let him have justice and reason, offering to deliver himself up a prisoner, and so to remain till he had cleared himself of the charges brought against him: which we considering just and reasonable, and having taken advice of our Council, accepted the offer, and commanded that Jacques Cœur should be confined in the castle of Taillebourg, and there guarded and kept for a time; after which we had him transported to our castle of Lusignan, in which castle Jacques Cœur was interrogated many times, both by our Council and others, notable men, commissioned and deputed by us, and his confessions placed in writing.

"And afterwards, when our important affairs called us to the castle of Montils les Tours, Jacques Cœur was transported from our castle of Lusignan to the castle of Maillé, where before us and our said commissioners were brought several other informations, being charges against the said Jacques Cœur, we ordered anew that they should be seen and visited; and by them the said Jacques Cœur was found charged, that, since the year 1429, he being *compagnon de la ferme* of our

finance at Bourges, caused to be coined crowns at a low price, such as crowns at seventy-six, eighty, and eighty-nine crowns the mark, and fourteen and fifteen carats, when he ought to have coined crowns of seventy to the mark, and eighteen carats, according to our royal ordinances, and by this means that he made a profit of from twenty to thirty crowns in the mark, when there should only have been two, thus defrauding and robbing us and the public treasure of our kingdom, and by so doing committing the crime of forgery.

" Again, that he was guilty of a similar offence in the year 1430.

" Again, he is accused of having caused a great quantity of armour to be transported to the said Saracens and misbelievers, in order that his people and his galleys should be well treated, and be allowed to go free without paying the duties for their trade in the spices of Alexandria which the soldan exacts. And, worse than all, to have bribed the said soldan by presenting him with harness in our name, although he had neither charge nor commission from us to do so: and the common report is, that the Saracens, in consequence of being provided with the said quantity of armour, gained a battle over the Christians, by which means blame has been thrown on us for having suffered such an act, those persons who blame us considering that we were cognisant of that of which we were ignorant.

" Also, Jacques Cœur is accused of having sent great quantities of copper to the Saracens, and to have caused ingots of the same to be made in our kingdom, and to have adulterated our money, and caused to be made current base coin, after having sold to the Saracens and miscreants large quantities of white money so adulterated, without licence from us; thus enriching our enemies and impoverishing us.

" And, to secure the end he had in view, Jacques Cœur, by his authority having power in his hands caused a false seal with a fleur-de-lis to be made and used by his people, factors, and servants, falsifying and counterfeiting our mark, from whence great dishonour has fallen on our subjects; for the Saracens who had bought the said money, supposing it to be according to law, and afterwards finding it light, have commonly, and in the presence of many foreign merchants, accused the French of being cheats.

" Also, that, against our laws and ordinances, the said Jacques Cœur transported great quantities of money, as well gold as silver, to Avignon and elsewhere out of the kingdom, when, as having been our master of the mint, he could not but be acquainted with our laws on this subject.

" The said Jacques Cœur is also charged with the following:—In 1446, his galley, called Saint Denis, being at Alexandria, and having for its captain Michelet Teinturier, a young child of four-

teen or fifteen years of age, a Christian, being in the land of Prester John, detained captive by a Saracen, did, on board the said galley, throw himself on his knees before the said captain, crying 'Pater noster! Ave Maria!' and proclaiming that he wished to be a good Christian, and that for that cause he had fled from the house of his master the Saracen; and that the said Michelet caused him to be brought in the galley as far as our town of Montpellier, where the said child remained for more than two months with certain of the townspeople and merchants, and also with Master Pierre du Moulin, then Archbishop of Toulouse, serving him as his groom, during which time the said child acted as a Christian, going to church, hearing mass like others, and allowed his liberty, without any impediment such as slaves are accustomed to: nevertheless, the said Jacques Cœur, coming to Montpellier, summoned the said Teinturier before him, and received him very ill, saying many injurious things to him, and reprimanding him severely for having brought the said slave from Alexandria, and robbed his master of him, in consequence of which his galleys might in future suffer; and that Teinturier excused himself, and related to the said Jacques Cœur how the case stood, shewing that there was little danger to his vessels, for that the Saracen would rather have fifty ducats than the said child: nevertheless, Jacques Cœur paid

no attention to these representations, but insisted that the child should be restored to his master, declaring, that, if any harm came to any of his vessels through this act, he would ruin the said Michelet and his father also. And he sent also for Isaac Teinturier, the father, and repeated the same threat to him, swearing to destroy him, body and goods, if he did not immediately repair what had been done. Upon which the said child was seized upon by the orders of Jacques Cœur, and for more than two months imprisoned in the prisons of the bailly of our said town of Montpellier, until the galleys of Jacques Cœur were ready to transport him back to the country of the Saracens, where he was delivered to his master, and has since renounced the Christian religion. The said Jacques Cœur having thus committed great and enormous crimes, those of lese majesty, public force, private imprisonment, transportation without privilege, and others.

" Also, he is accused of having taken on his own account several men whom he called ruffians and thieves, and caused them to work in his galleys, amongst whom was taken a young man who was a German pilgrim, who was going to St. James, and was said to be a churchman, who, finding himself seized upon and forced on board these galleys, was so distressed and desperate, that he threw himself overboard and was drowned.

"Also, two sergeants of our said town of Montpellier were taken by the people of the said Jacques Cœur and forced on board his galleys, and delivered over to corsairs in exchange for other persons; and that one or both of our said sergeants have since died in the hands of those corsairs.

"Also, Jacques Cœur is accused of having caused to be made, on his own authority and without our knowledge, a small seal of lead or copper, similar to our own little seal *de décret*, the which little seal, after the arrest of Jacques Cœur, was thrown in the fire and melted secretly by some of his people and servants.

"And it has been discovered, that, at the time when a treaty of marriage was pending between our dear and well-beloved daughter Jeanne with our dear and well-beloved cousin the Count de Clermont, the said Jacques Cœur, excited by avarice, and not having our interest and honour before his eyes as he ought to have had, declared to the Sieurs de Canillac and de la Fayette and others, who sought us in our town of Chinon on the part of our dear cousin the Duke de Bourbon respecting the said treaty of marriage, that they could do nothing with us regarding the marriage, except we had first two thousand crowns to play at dice with and pay for our amusements at the feasts of Christmas then approaching; and that he had obtained the said sum of the Seigneurs de

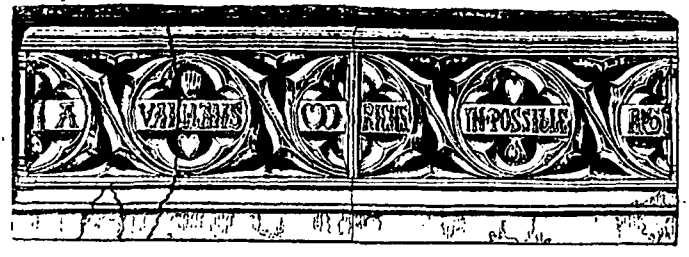
Canillac and de la Fayette, thus greatly impeaching our honour, for never should we have deigned to think of such a thing.

" Also, for having received large sums of money fraudulently, to pay the indemnities of certain galleys, which he retained, to the great detriment of the said vessels.

" Also, for turning to his own profit certain farms and fairs in Languedoc, instead of rendering an account to us for the profits of the same; at the same time deceiving those who were companions with him in the said lands, and obtaining money for them as if for our profit and advantage, to the amount of nine thousand five hundred and fifty livres.

" Also, without our knowledge, having taxed our said subjects of Languedoc, and committed great exactions by means sometimes of bribes and sometimes by gifts, so that our people and country were reduced to destitution.

" Also, that, having thus deceived us and obtained large quantities of our revenues, the said Jacques Cœur has affected to supply us with loans of his own money, in truth drawn from our own funds, and that we have been forced to enter into engagements to pay the said loans by new burthens on our own revenues," &c.



CHAPTER XXV.

JUDGES.—DEBTORS.—CHARGES.—TORTURES.

THE judges appointed at the trial of Jacques Cœur were not chosen from persons belonging to the Parliament, who might be unprejudiced, and have felt the necessity of administering impartial justice. He was cited before a commission appointed to decide on his crimes; and at the head of that body were Antoine de Chabannes and Guillaume Gouffier, first chamberlain of the king, both his avowed enemies, and both greedy of his wealth.

The first charge against Jacques Cœur, of conspiring with the dauphin, had been abandoned and had died away: the next of the murder of Agnès Sorel, not only fell to the ground, but, so glaring was its injustice, that the Lady of Montagne, who had ventured to accuse him, convicted of having been bribed and proved to be malicious, was arrested and imprisoned at the same

time as her intended victim, and, together with her accomplices, was condemned to make the *amende honorable.*

The plain, clear, and full exculpation of both these charges, which Jacques Cœur was enabled to give to his disappointed judges, ought of course to have been conclusive, and he should have been dismissed as innocent; but this would by no means have suited those who, incredible as it may appear, had *already* possessed themselves of great part of his wealth, which they were resolved never to disgorge.

The list of his debtors was enormous, and not one of them was content that he should escape. The Count de Foix was indebted to him two thousand nine hundred and eighty-five crowns of gold. Amongst the names of those interested in getting rid of their creditor might be read bishops, marshals of France, knights, chamberlains, escretaries and others of the king's household, down to the servants and lowest attendants, even to house-painters and washer-women!

All was properly arranged, in order, that, when one accusation failed, others should be ready; and they formed themselves into the following order, as has been seen in the official judgment lately cited :—

" That he had sent out of the kingdom silver and copper in great quantities.

"That he had counterfeited the little seal of the king, and ruined the province of Languedoc by his numberless exactions and extortions, calculated to make the discontent of the people fall heavily on the monarch.

"That he had sent back to Alexandria a Christian slave who took refuge in one of his vessels, and who had, since his return, abjured the Christian religion.

"That he had, without permission either from the king or the Pope, transported arms for the use of the Saracens, by means of which they had obtained a victory over the Christians.

"In fine, that he had, without cognizance of the king, sent to the soldan a complete suit of armour such as is fabricated in France, in order that similar armour might be made by workmen in his country."

The king named a second commission to take into consideration these new accusations. Meanwhile the prisoner was transferred from the castle of Taillebourg to that of Lusignan, where he was interrogated by his enemy Guillaume Gouffier, who made the necessary notes and examined witnesses—those witnesses who, in after days, when it was too late to do justice to the oppressed, acknowledged that they had accepted bribes to betray him, and confessed that every word they then uttered was false!

It would seem that Charles VII. at this junc-

ture began to awaken to the injustice of his conduct and to feel remorse for his ingratitude; but he had given the power out of his own hands and could not now withdraw their victim from the wretches who sought to immolate him.

Startled and amazed at the result of the inquiries already instituted, Charles himself made an appeal to the commissioners, urging them to act according to the laws, and to be guided by conscience. Had he known the judges to be honest men, there would have been no occasion for such a charge; probably he knew them to be otherwise, and their motives were sufficiently clear, to make him repent the share he had taken in this nefarious business. But how was he to recede? What means had he of repaying the ruined merchant, whose gold he, as well as his knights and courtiers, found so useful and necessary? He turned away his eyes, fixed them on the coffers full of treasure belonging to his argentier, and allowed the trial to go on.

It required but little knowledge of commercial transactions to be aware that it is necessary for money sometimes to be sent out of the country, and sometimes to be received, according to the balance which merchants have established. In this respect, the first accusation made against Jacques Cœur fell at once to the ground of itself.

On the second point, he protested, that "he had all his life served King Charles with all his

power, prudently and loyally, without having appropriated or misused any of the king's money, but was always ready to acknowledge that by his favour and protection he had advanced in his negotiations, and acquired the fortune which he enjoyed."

As a proof of his trustworthy conduct as regarded Languedoc, he cited the grants that had been made him in that province as a reward for his services there, and which alone triumphantly refuted all charges of malversation.

He called upon witnesses in opposition to those who had been brought against him, but these were not listened to. He was ordered instantly to produce letters, papers, receipts, and discharges which he had said would at once clear him. He replied, that, if his liberty were granted him, he could obtain them; but, from the depth of his dungeon, he asked how it was possible for him to collect so many papers, dispersed in various quarters, some of them on board his vessels in the Levant, others in the hands of his traders, who, on his arrest, considered that their own safety consisted in concealment.

He entreated that his chief factor, Guillaume de Varic, should be allowed to return to France, to assist him in these researches: he represented, that he, who was a confidential agent, and was intimately acquainted with his affairs, was the

person most capable of satisfying all inquiries; but his supplication was in vain.

He next begged to be allowed advocates and a council to defend his cause; but was answered, that this was an indulgence never accorded to a minister of finance accused of malversation in his office, who was only allowed to defend himself by his own speech. He was, however, offered the assistance of persons of his acquaintance whom he might choose; but when, in indicating several, he named the Bishop of Agde, in whom he placed particular confidence, his presence was refused.

He was then obliged to abandon all hope, and gave himself up, as he said, to the good grace of the king; adding, "in respect of myself and all my possessions, all are the king's, at his disposal to do with them as he sees fit."

He made, however, one more effort, soliciting to be allowed to call upon his son Jean Cœur, Archbishop of Bourges, a prelate whose piety, probity, and liberality were respected by every one; he requested that he might give to the judges certain papers, which his factors would produce if the archbisbop applied for them in his name. This was also refused.

Two of his factors were at length named, both being men whom he had placed in the king's service, one the king's secretary, and one a clerk in the treasury; but neither of these were conversant in matters connected with finance, which

circumstance he represented in vain. The commission given them to obtain information in favour of their master in Languedoc, crippled all their efforts and made them of no avail.

Oh castle of Melusine! Oh Lusignan! famous in romance and history, thou art now rased to the ground, with scarcely a vestige left even of that dungeon where the honest minister of an ungrateful prince languished, or the beautiful fairy bathed her serpent limbs in the fabled fountain,—but the memory of injustice, and the indignation of it, survive thy towers, and give thy site a moral!

From Lusignan the persecuted captive was removed to Maillé, near Tours, there to await further treachery and tyranny. The reason of this removal was, that the Bishop of Poitiers had claimed the prisoner as belonging to his diocese, and as being a tonsured clerk,* subject to his jurisdiction. Jacques Cœur, finding, that, although the commissioners appointed to judge him were occasionally changed in order to make some show of justice, yet that new enemies appeared in the new appointments, and everything tended to his overthrow, saw no way but to plead the privilege of the tonsure, which rendered him amenable only to the clergy.

On being removed to Tours, the archbishop

* It was not unusual at this period for married men to belong to the Church.

there also came forward and reclaimed his prisoner; but, regardless even of the rights of the Church, the commissioners kept firm hold of their victim, and turned a deaf ear to every requisition in his favour.

Meantime he ceased not strenuously to assert his innocence: he appealed to the Cardinal d'Estouteville, the Bishop of Agde, and even to the king himself, to produce proofs that he asserted the truth. But it was far from answering the views of his judges to make any application to the king. All they would do was to accord to the accused a delay of two months, to obtain the means of his justification, beginning from the 1st of July, 1452, and ending on the 1st September following.

This proposal came from Antoine de Chabannes himself, who made this show of consideration to the man he injured. It was indeed but a show, for the letters given to the two deputies appointed to seek documents in Languedoc were not dated for more than a fortnight afterwards, thus leaving no time for the difficult business they had to transact.

Jacques Cœur, while he accepted this boon, remonstrated on its insufficiency; for it was necessary to seek in the different towns of Languedoc the orders given by the king for the levy of supplies; receipts, which justified their employment; letters, by which a part of the money was

named as destined for his own use; in fine, permissions which he had obtained from the popes Eugenius and Nicolas V. for the transport of arms to the Saracens.

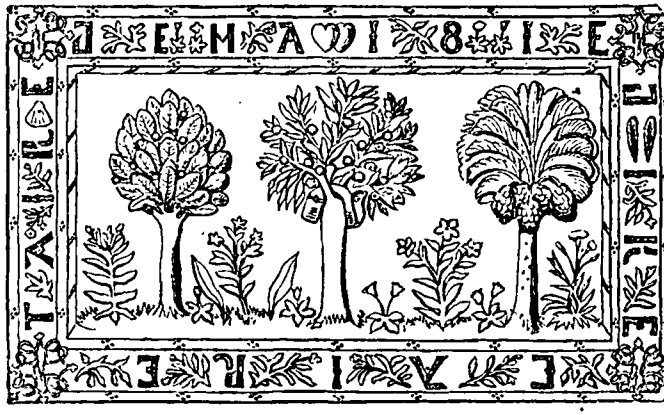
If these permissions were not to be found at Montpellier or at Aiguesmortes, it would be necessary to seek them in the registers at Rome. They were in fact *not found:* good care had no doubt been taken that they should not be forthcoming; yet that they existed there could be no question, for copies were afterwards obtained with certificates which prove their authenticity. The permission of Pope Eugenius is dated in 1445, and that of Pope Nicolas in 1451.

For eleven months Jacques Cœur had languished in prison. Not less than one hundred and fifty witnesses had been heard against him. The first respite granted was expired, a second had passed away, but the judges could gain nothing positive to criminate him. He was transferred from the château de Maillé to that of Tours. On the 13th January, 1453, the king authorised another commission, addressed to Antoine d'Aubusson, Otto Castellani, and others, by which he invested them with powers to continue the trial and the interrogation of Jacques Cœur.

The prisoner had again recourse to his only means, that of rejecting his judges as belonging to the laity, he being tonsured; and he also protested against them as being notoriously inimical

to him. Fatigued and exasperated with his firmness, his judges ordered, on the 22nd March, that *he should be put to the question !*

Tortures! for the man who had created the maritime commerce of France; who had restored her king to his throne, and driven bold and victorious strangers from her shores; whose wealth had propped the dignity of almost every family in the country; and whose connexion with the most sacred class in the realm, amongst whom his son and brother held high offices, might at least have claimed for him respect and mercy.



CHAPTER XXVI.

THE SOLDAN'S LETTER.—STRANGE ANIMAL.—EARLY TRAVELLERS.—BAWME.—SPIKENARD.

On the 23rd of March, 1453, Jacques Cœur was brought before the commissioners. He was stripped and bound: in vain he insisted on his clerical capacity; they were inexorable, and he was at length forced to give way, and consent to reply to some of the charges preferred.

One of these was brought by two unworthy men, who had formerly been in his service, and were patrons of certain of his galleys. Their names were Michel and Isaac Teinturier, and he recognised in them persons whom he knew to have hostile feelings towards him. Michel stated that it was in a vessel which he commanded that the runaway slave before mentioned had sought refuge, and that they brought him to France:

that he had been sent back to his master, and had since apostatised.

Jacques Cœur did not deny the fact, but stated, in the first place, that he had no reason to think the slave was a Christian; in the next, he held that Michel had no right to carry off or furtively receive a slave who belonged to a Saracen, since, by agreement made with the Soldan of Egypt, it was expressly stipulated that the subjects of both nations should refrain from carrying off those in the employment of either. Several merchants had loudly protested against this act, urging that it compromised their safety; and he had received information from the grand master of Rhodes, of the intention of the Saracens to make reprisals on the very first opportunity that occurred. Consequently, his agents at Montpellier, after mature deliberation and consultation, had decided to send back the slave to his master; considering that they merely performed an act of justice, in obeying the articles of treaty which had been entered into by both nations.

As a proof of the understanding between the Mahomedans and merchants trading with them, it is enough to read the contemporary travels of La Brocquière, who relates in the fullest manner what was expected of those who were admitted to the ports of the Levant.

For instance, when describing the town of Bursa, which he names as the most considerable

of all the towns in the possession of the Turks, of great extent, and carrying on a considerable trade, "being situated at the foot of the north side of Mount Olympus, whence flows a river which, passing through the town, divides itself into several branches, forming, as it were, a number of small towns, that makes it look larger than it is;" he relates that he was shocked by seeing the public market-house, where Christian slaves are sold; and he mentions, that several Florentine merchants here had interested themselves about a Spaniard, who, having been a slave to the sultan, found means to escape from Egypt and came to Bursa. "They begged I would take him with me: I carried him at my expense as far as Constantinople, where I left him; but I am persuaded he was a renegade, and I have never heard anything of him since."

No doubt this sort of character was common, and Jacques Cœur had too much penetration not to perceive at once that the whole scene of the pretended Christian slave was got up for an interested purpose. Of course, therefore, he lost no time in restoring the runaway slave to his master, unwilling, for a worthless character, to expose his vessels to danger and the French name to dishonour.

La Brocquière states that the arrangements with regard to slaves were very strict at Constantinople; and he says, "There are merchants

from all nations in this town, but none so powerful as the Venetians, who have a bailiff that regulates their affairs, independent of the emperor and his officers. This privilege they have enjoyed for a long time: it is even said that they have twice, by their galleys, saved the town from the Turks, but for my part I believe that God has spared it *more for the holy relics it contains*, than anything else. The Turks have also an officer to superintend their commerce, who, like the Venetian bailiff, is independent of the emperor; they have even the privilege, that, if one of their slaves shall run away, and take refuge within the city, on their demanding him, the emperor is bound to give him up."

As for the suit of armour sent to the soldan, the prisoner explained, that he never imagined any difficulty could arise respecting it, for he had not attempted to comply with the soldan's request till he had asked and obtained the consent of the king. He recalled on this occasion an interview he had with Charles, in which the king exposed to him the difficulties that prevented his undertaking the conquest of Normandy; he recounted the fact of his having offered him his whole fortune if he pleased to take it, and that his majesty had honoured his servant by accepting two hundred thousand crowns of gold.

He added, that it was on this occasion, when, emboldened by his condescension, he had named

to him the request of the soldan, and was authorised by him to expedite the armour, according to the wish of the pagan monarch.*

When this was reported to Charles, he is said not to have expressly denied it, but to have professed his total inability to remember any such conversation or request: perhaps he also forgot the present which his argentier entreated him to accept.

A startling reminiscence might have been found in the letter of the soldan to himself, brought back from that prince by Jean de Village, one of Jacques Cœur's chief factors, who had married his neice, and who was charged with the delivery of the armour, and the acknowledgment of it. The following curious document is the letter alluded to, which, remarkable as it is in itself, and as regards the circumstances under which it was written, a few years had as entirely effaced from the royal memory, as the obligations which he owed to his ill-fated subject.

The letter was accompanied by several rich presents to the king, which Jean de Village, who also received "beaux dons," such as robes of cloth of gold and jewels, from the grateful soldan, was

* La Brocquière speaks of the arms in use among the Saracens, as cross-bows, swords, and small *harquebuses*, which they fired off every now and then. "It is curious," says his editor, "that our portable fire-arms, the invention of which is very recent in Europe, were at that time in use amongst the Mohammedans of Asia."

appointed to deliver to his majesty. The chronicler Mathieu de Coussy thus introduces this remarkable document :—

"In this year, 1447, Charles King of France received a letter from the Soldan of Babylon, which was translated from Saracen into French, and its tenor was what follows; and first the superscription :—

"'Let these letters be given to the lion, lord of the world, great as St. George who killed the dragon, lord of the country of France, benevolent king, king of kings, of whom all people demand permission, lord of the earth and sea, lord of strong castles, very Christian in the name of Saint John, who baptized Christ, and of our lady, friend of the Moors and the lord of the Moors. Our lord gives thee health and long life, Charles King of France. The sultan of all cities, the great king of kings, Jamark, Maher-el-Daher, the wise monarch, the warrior and defender of the laws of the Moors, great sultan of the Moors and their faith, who does justice to all who war against each other, lord of the two seas and of many lands, liberal to the slaves of his country of the two churches of Lamech and Abraham. God increase mine and give me good life, and to all my people, to whom I do much good.'

"*Letter of the Soldan of Egypt to Charles VII.*

"'In the name of God be it so! Mayst thou have long life, lord of the lion, of the dragon, of the wolf, of the *forticion*, who art the only Christian lord in the world, uncle of the lord who bears the yellow banner, that is to say, the King of Hungary, liberal, wise, and merciful, lord and counsellor of the other lords, lord of the land and the sea, and of all the Christians, powerful above all; maintainer of the baptism and defender of the banner of Christ, Charles of France, friend of the Moors and of their lords, God keep thee in peace, grant thy prayers, and give thee a happy death!

"'The Grand Sultan sends thee these letters, to assure thee that good friendship and accord reign between us. Thy letters we have seen and read, and believe that thou dost wish us well, as we do to thee.

"'Thy ambassador, a man of honour, a gentleman, whom thou callest Jean de Village, is come to our Sublime Porte, and has presented the letters with the present which thou hast sent, and I have received them; and what thou desirest of me to do, that have I done: therefore have I made peace with all thy merchants for all my countries and sea-ports, as thy ambassador has demanded.

"'The said ambassador came in great honour,

and also has taken his presents in great love and pleasure, for the love of thee.

"'That which thou hast desired is written and done; and I have sent to all the lords of my dominions, and especially to the Lord of Alexandria, that he show good-fellowship to all the merchants from thy country, and to all others having liberty to trade in my dominions, that honour and pleasure may be done them; and when the consul of thy country is come, he shall have high favour amongst the other consuls. And I have ordained that good-fellowship shall be shewn to the pilgrims of thy country, who go to Jerusalem and Saint Catherine; for the said ambassador has also begged this of me, and nothing shall be taken of them but what it is customary to pay to other sultans: they shall be despoiled by none, nor injury of any sort done to them. And all that the said ambassador has asked for the pilgrims, and all other things, have I done for thy love, and thy ambassador departs from my Sublime Porte with his answers. And I have clothed him in a robe of honour according to custom, for thy honour, the which I have given him, having told the said ambassador that I consent that a consul shall be sent from thee to reside in my dominions, in order that peace may be between us.

"'I send thee a present by the said ambassador, to wit, a balm made of our holy vine; a fine

leopard; three basons of the porcelain of China; a dish of the same; two great covered dishes of porcelain; two green vases of porcelain; two nosegays of porcelain; a washing-bason, and a safe of open porcelain; a jar of fine green ginger; a jar of almond kernels; a jar of green pepper; some almonds, and fifty pounds of our fine *bamouquet;* also a quintal of fine sugar, thrice refined.

" 'God lead thee to his salvation, Charles of France.' "

What animal the *forticion* is, mentioned in this letter by the soldan, it is difficult to decide. Early travellers beheld extraordinary creatures, as the following narrative by La Brocquière exemplifies: — " We thus travelled two days in the desert absolutely without seeing anything worthy of being related. Only one morning I saw, before sunrise, an animal running on four legs, about three feet long, but scarcely a palm in height. The Arabians fled at the sight of it, and the animal hastened to hide itself in a bush hard by. Sir Andrew and Pierre de Vaudier dismounted and pursued it, sword in hand, when it began to cry like a cat on the approach of a dog. Pierre de Vaudier struck it on the back with the point of his sword, but did it no harm, from its being covered with scales like a sturgeon. It sprang at Sir Andrew, who, with a blow from his sword, cut the neck partly through,

and flung it on its back with its feet in the air, and killed it. The head resembled that of a large hare; the feet were like the hands of a young child, with a pretty long tail like that of the large green lizard." This mysterious creature was probably no other than the monitor lizard.

With respect to the marvels that early travellers beheld, it is useless to express surprise at them. La Brocquière is by no means extravagant in his relations, and he makes no mention of a variety of wonders commonly believed before his time. It was evident that the frequent visits of merchants to Arabia and Syria had considerably enlightened the world since the days when Sir John Maundevile indulged in his unique descriptions of objects in natural history never seen since his time.

The Venetian merchants were in the habit, in the century which had the advantage of Sir John's experiences, of selling, at the great fairs of St. Mark, plumes from the wings of the phœnix, which were supposed to be brought from the East; and the avidity with which they were purchased shewed the amount of credulity which permitted accounts like the following to influence the eager buyers of such treasures:—

"In Egypt in the city of Elyople,* that is to say, the City of the Sun, is a temple made round, after the fashion of the Temple of Jerusalem:

* See Travels of Sir John Maundevile.

the priests of that temple have all their writings under the date of the fowl that is called fenix, and there is none but one in the world. And he cometh to burn himself upon the altar of the temple at the end of five hundred years, for so long he liveth. And at the five hundred years' end, the priests array the altar *honestly*, and put thereon spices and sulphur and other things that will burn lightly. And then the bird fenix cometh and burneth himself to ashes: and the first day next after, men find in the ashes a worm; and the second day next after, men find a bird quick and perfect; and the third day next after, he flyeth away. And so there is no more birds of that kind in all the world but it alone, and truly that is a great miracle.

"This bird men have seen oftentime flying in the countries, and he is not mickle more than an eagle, and he hath a crest of feathers upon his head more great than the peacock hath, and his neck is yellow, after the colour of an *oriélle*, that is a stone well shining, and his beak is coloured blue, and his wings are of a purple colour, and the tail yellow and red, casting his tail again in travers. And he is a full fair bird to look upon against the sun, for he shineth fully gloriously and nobly.

"Also in that country men find long apples in their season, called apples of Paradise, right sweet and of good savour; and though you cut

them in never so many gobettes, or parts, you shall ever find in the midst the figure of the holy cross; and they have great leaves of a foot and a half long, and equally large. And here men find also the apple-tree of Adam, that has a bite at one of the sides."

Perhaps the *bamouquet*, mentioned in the soldan's letter, may be explained by the following description:—

"Also beside Cayre, without the city, is the field where *bawme* groweth: and it cometh out on small trees that are no higher than a man's girdle, and they seem as wood that is of the wild vine: and in that field are seven wells that our Lord made with one of his feet when he went to play with other children. That field is not so well closed but that men may enter as they will, except in the season when the bawme is growing; for then men are put there to guard it, so that no person may enter. This bawme grows in no place but only there, and if that men bring of the plants to plant in other countries, they grow well and fair, but bring forth no fruit.

"Men cut the branches with a sharp flint-stone or sharp bone, for if they are cut with iron it would destroy the nature and the virtue.

"The Saracens call this wood *enonch balse*, and the fruit they call *abebissam*, and the liquor that droppeth from the branches they call *guybalse*. And men cause that bawme always to be tilled

by Christians, or else it would not fructify; so the Saracens say themselves, for it has been tried and proved.

"This bawme grows also in Inde, the more in the desert *where the trees of the sun and moon spoke to Alexander; but I have not seen it.*"

The traveller goes on to set forth the merits of the famous balm, held in such high esteem wherever it was known, and he proceeds to say: "A man ought to take good heed in buying of this bawme, for if he knows it not right well he may easily be deceived: for men sell a gum called *turbentyne* instead of it, and they put thereto a little bawme to give it odour, and some put wax in oil of the wood of the fruit, and some distil cloves of gillyflower, and spikenard of Spain, and other spices that are sweet-smelling, and the buyer thinks he hath the bawme, *and he hath it not.* For the Saracens counterfeit it subtlely by craft, and after them the merchants and apothecaries do the like, so that it is less worth and a great deal worse."

Or this *bamouquet* may be that famous "wood which cometh out of Paradise terrestrial, which is good for many divers medicines, and is right valuable;" or that "*thing* that men call *cambyle,* which they eat instead of spice, and sell it. And let men make the hole where it is taken out of the earth ever so deep, or so wide, at the

year's end it is full again to the sides, through the grace of God."

Or conjecture may point to that wood, still more wonderful, "called by the Saracens *dirpe*, that is of Abraham's time, and is named the dry tree: and they say that it hath been there since the beginning of the world, and was sometime green, and bare leaves until the time that our Lord died on the cross, and then it dried, and so did all the trees that were then in the world; and some say, by prophecy, that a prince of the west side of the world shall win the land of promise with the help of Christian men, and he shall sing a mass under that dry tree, and then the tree shall become green, and bear both fruit and leaves. And through this miracle many Saracens and Jews shall be turned to the Christian faith; and therefore they do great worship thereto, and keep it full carefully. And although it be dry yet is it of great virtue, for whoever beareth a little of it upon him it healeth him of the falling evil, and his horse shall not be foundered; and many other virtues it hath, wherefore men hold it full precious."

The "bamouquet" defines itself with no greater precision than the "forticion," whose etymology has already excited conjecture. It belongs to that class of unknown objects of which Sir William Jones has justly said, "It is

painful to meet perpetually with words that convey no distinct ideas; and a natural desire of avoiding that pain excites us often to make inquiries, the result of which can have no other use than to give us clear conceptions. Ignorance is to the mind what extreme darkness is to the nerves; both cause an uneasy sensation; and we naturally love knowledge, as we love light, even when we have no design of applying either to a purpose essentially useful."

There is nothing which enables us to identify, with any degree of certainty the "bamouquet," of which fifty pounds weight were sent to Charles VII., with "the balm from our holy vine;" but it is not improbable that the same thing is meant. The balm, which the soldan describes with a vagueness by no means satisfactory to a botanist, may possibly be the precious nard, which, up to a comparatively recent period, was looked upon as a remedy for all diseases, as sovereign as the unguent of Holloway, or the celebrated "balm of Gilead."

The learned Orientalist above quoted, who threw light on, and added interest to, every object to which he directed his attention, was at some pains to discover what the spikenard of the ancients really was, and devoted two separate papers to the inquiry. The conclusion which he arrived at is as follows, and it may not be consi-

dered irrelevant to introduce it as a *pendant* to Sir John Maundevile's description of the "bawme of Cayre."

Sir William Jones says: "My own inquiries have convinced me, that the *Indian* spikenard of Dioscorides is the *sumbulu'l Hind*, and that the *sumbulu'l Hind* is the jatámánsì of Amarsinh. I am persuaded that the true nard is a species of *valerian* produced in the *most remote* and hilly parts of India, such as *Nepal*, *Morang*, and *Butan*, near which Ptolemy fixes its native soil. The commercial agents of the Devaraja call it also *pampi;* and by their account, the dried specimens, which look like the tails of ermines, *rise from the ground, resembling ears of green wheat both in form and colour;* a fact which perfectly accounts for the names *stachys*, *spica*, *sumbul*, and khúshah, which Greeks, Romans, Arabs, and Persians have given to the drug, though it is not properly a *spike*, and not merely a root, but *the whole plant*, which the natives gather for sale before the radical leaves, of which the fibres only remain after a few months, have unfolded themselves from the base of the stem. It is used, say the Butan agents, as a perfume and in medicinal unguents, but with other fragrant substances, the scent and power of which it is thought to increase. As a medicine, they add, it is principally esteemed for complaints in the

bowels. Though considerable quantities of jatámánsì are brought in the caravans from Butan, yet the living plants, by a law of the country, cannot be exported without a licence from the sovereign; and the late Mr. Purling, on receiving this intelligence, obligingly wrote, for my satisfaction, to the Devaraja, requesting him to send eight or ten of the plants to Rangpur: ten were accordingly sent in pots from Tasisudan, with as many of the natives to take care of them under a chief, who brought a written answer from the Raja of Butan; but that prince made a great merit of having complied with such a request, and my friend had the trouble of entertaining the messenger and his train for several weeks in his own house, which they seem to have left with reluctance. An account of this transaction was contained in one of the last letters that Mr. Purling lived to write; but, as all the plants withered before they could reach Calcutta, and as inquiries of greater importance engaged all my time, there was an end of my endeavours to procure the first jatámánsì, though not of my conviction, that it is *the true nard of the ancients.*"

We must not look for similarity of name to guide us in endeavouring to show that the bamouquet of Egypt and the jatámánsì of Nepal are identical, but refer for the likelihood of such being the fact to the esteem in which it was held in its native country, and the purposes

to which it was applied, and that the plant had engaged the attention of the great Egyptian historian, whose inquiries may have led to its introduction into central Egypt. That the soldan highly valued the drug, is evident from its being included with so many rare objects in a royal present.

CHAPTER XXVII.

FRENCH NAME.—LA BROCQUIERE.—BAD ODOURS.—JOAN OF ARC.—JEAN DE LUXEMBOURG.—LAON.

So far from the French name having suffered by any act of Jacques Cœur during his commercial transactions with the soldan and his subjects, it is plain that the name of Frenchman was a spell to open a prison gate, as the narrative of the traveller La Brocquière testifies. By this it appears that a native of France was considered in a superior light to Venetians, Genoese, or others known in those parts.

"I returned to Damascus, and on the evening of the departure of the caravan settled my affairs and my conscience as if I had been at the point of death; but suddenly I found myself in great trouble. I have before mentioned the messen-

ger whom the sultan had sent with orders to arrest all the Genoese and Catalonian merchants found within his dominions. By virtue of this order, my host, who was a Genoese, was arrested, his effects seized, and a Moor placed in his house to take care of them. I endeavoured to save all I could for him; and, that the Moor might not notice it, I made him drunk. I was arrested in my turn, and carried before one of the cadies, who are considered as somewhat like our bishops, and have the office of administering justice. This cadi turned me over to another, who sent me to prison with the merchants, although he knew I was not one; but this disagreeable affair had been brought on me by an interpreter, who wanted to extort money from me, as he had before attempted on my first journey hither.

"Had it not been for Antoine Mourrougin, the Venetian consul, I must have paid a sum of money; but I remained in prison, and in the meantime the caravan set off. The consul, to obtain my liberty, was forced to make intercession, conjointly with others, to the Governor of Damascus, alleging that I had been arrested without a cause, which the interpreter well knew. The Governor sent for a Genoese, named Gentil Imperial, a merchant employed by the Sultan to purchase slaves for him at Caffa. He asked me who I was, and my business at Damascus. On my replying that I was a Frenchman returning

from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, he said they had done wrong to detain me, and that I might depart when I pleased."

The traveller after this set out in high spirits, and probably resumed those "vermilion-coloured boots with spurs," which he mentions having bought, "such as are worn by men of fortune when they ride, and which come up to the knees." He describes himself afterwards as wearing "a high red hat with a *huvette* of iron round it." He wore the same dress when presented to the Duke of Burgundy on his return home. He speaks of a custom prevalent, particularly amongst the higher order of Turks, which is, to be baptized in the Greek manner, as they assert that this process entirely destroys the unpleasant smell which is said to cling to all but Christians. "All the grandees," says our author, "do this."

There is an Oriental tradition that a certain tribe, for their sins, were afflicted by Heaven with a disagreeable odour, to conceal which they are forced to use all kinds of powerful scents. The natives of the East are, at all times, remarkable for the strength or dulness of their olfactory nerves, and are said to be able to endure smells which would nearly poison an European.

The application of pure water may perhaps be found more effectual than all their usual perfumes to remove impurity; and this may account, in some measure, for their notion of the utility, in this respect, of baptism.

It appears that European matters were freely discussed by the Mahomedans and Greeks, who were in habits of intercourse with Europeans at this time, and they must afterwards have felt little less indignation when the persecution of their friend the great merchant reached their ears, than they did when the abandonment of Joan of Arc shocked their minds.

What La Brocquière says of the opinion of the Greeks respecting the fate of La Pucelle is singular, and a reproach which it must have been difficult for the Burgundian subjects of France to remove.

"I was lodged with a Catalonian merchant, who having told one of the officers of the palace that I was attached to my lord of Burgundy, the emperor caused me to be asked if it were true that the duke had betrayed the Pucelle d'Orléans, which the Greeks would scarcely believe. I told them truly how the matter had passed, at which they were greatly astonished."

The atrocious vengeance of the duke's officer, Jean de Luxembourg, Count de Ligny, who sold the heroine to the English, had resounded through Europe. At Constantinople public rumour attributed it to the duke himself, but the Greeks would not believe that a Christian prince could have committed such an act.

The deeds, however, of Jean de Luxembourg, if all had been known to this nation which shud-

dered to hear of such a cruel return shewn to the unhappy heroine, would have left no doubt on the minds of any, and would have exonerated the duke himself from blame in this particular instance.

This ferocious chief, distinguished for brutality even in that age, is celebrated for his cruelties in the Laonnois, which, in 1429, endeavoured to emancipate itself from the dominion of the English and Burgundians.

After Charles VII. was crowned at Reims, he took several towns in the Laonnois; and at length, arriving at Laon, summoned the city to surrender. The inhabitants, willing to shake off a yoke they had long borne with impatience, and encouraged by the vicinity of the royal army, recently so successful, did not hesitate to rise against the English, and to send word to the king that they were ready to submit to him, entreating him to honour their town by entering its gates. Accordingly Charles hastened to accept the welcome invitation, and was received with transports of joy on his entry: he left marks of his confidence and esteem with the inhabitants, and, on this occasion, established one of the two fairs which still exist in that interesting old city.

The Laonnois, however, continued to be ravaged by the contending parties, and in October, 1430, the town of Ostel was taken by Vendome

governor of Laon, and Thoumelaire the prévôt. Their soldiers, whose fury was not to be restrained, in revenge for great cruelties exercised in the country, massacred the commandant, Antoine de Béthune, without respect to the capitulation which had taken place.

Jean de Luxembourg, who was a near relative of the commandant, no sooner heard of this, than he vowed to take signal vengeance for the act. At first he began by insulting the faubourgs of Laon, and afterwards dispatched four hundred picked men, under the conduct of experienced officers, to surprise the fort of St. Vincent, which was slenderly garrisoned.

The Burgundians approached under favour of the night, and climbed the wall without being perceived. The cries they uttered, however, on entering the fort, awoke the garrison. Surprised, but not disconcerted by this unexpected visit, the besieged rallied at one of the gates and defended it with courage. While the soldiers were keeping the enemy in play, Pennesac, commander of the fort, let himself down the walls by a rope, and was enabled to reach the town of Laon by the side of Chénizelles. He instantly made known to the sentinel what had occurred at St. Vincent, and demanded assistance. The streets immediately re-echoed to the cries of the guard; townsmen and soldiers all at once rushed to arms, and

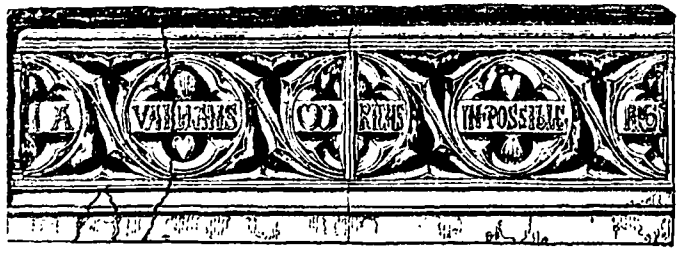
the gallant Pennesac, putting himself at the head of the readiest, rushed to the scene of combat: he found it still raging, and many of the Burgundians dispersed in the abbey, intent on plundering all they could find.

Pennesac, profiting in his turn by the surprise caused by the apparition of his band, charged the enemy with vigour, killed more than sixty, and put the rest to flight. Several of the Burgundian captains were left dead on the spot, and others were carried in triumph into the town, being kept prisoners till a heavy ransom was paid for them.

This affair was of great importance in giving reputation to the royalists, but increased tenfold the bitter enmity of De Luxembourg. He soon contrived to make the Prévôt Thoumelaire his first victim, for he surprised him in a castle to which he had been inveigled, and mercilessly put him to death with all his officers. He laid in wait, after this, for his successor Rousselet, whom he got into his power and caused to be hanged, together with seventy other prisoners whom he had taken near D'Assy; all this was contrary to the rules of war, and worthy of the wretched traitor who could sell the heroic Jeanne to the enemies of his country.

He carried his cruelty on this occasion so far as to make a pastime of death, and indulged his young nephew, whose guardian he was, and who

became afterwards sufficiently known as the Connétable de St. Pol, in the amusement of strangling his prisoners. Monstrelet records that the youthful savage was delighted with the task, in which he took singular satisfaction: he was, indeed, a nephew worthy of such an uncle.



CHAPTER XXVIII.

DEATH OF MACEE DE LEODEPART.—JEAN CŒUR'S PROTEST.—CONDEMNATION.—AMENDE HONORABLE.—THE LADY OF MONTAGNE. — RAPID APPROPRIATION. — CLAIM OF THE CHURCH REJECTED.—DIVISION OF SPOIL.—ESTATES.

THE firmness and clearness of the replies of Jacques Cœur, when interrogated on his trial, were such as to embarrass his venal judges, who, in order to force him into some confession, again menaced him with the torture on the 27th March; but he remained resolute in asserting his entire innocence, and defied their utmost malice.

They removed him to a fifth prison, the castle of Poitiers, and here a heavy affliction overtook him in the death of his wife, Macée de Léodepart: her gentle nature could not support a frightful reverse of fortune, which from the very height of prosperity had cast her noble and generous husband "into the lowest depths of misery."

Month after month passed away and he was

still a prisoner, still surrounded by malignant enemies, and the terror of torture always hanging over him. The continual state of horror and dread into which she was thrown was too much for her, and she fell, the first victim to these cruel proceedings.

Another effort was now made by the Bishop of Poitiers to obtain the charge of Jacques Cœur, in virtue of his being a *clerc solu:* the death of his wife had given him a further hold on the Church; but his judges again resisted the appeal. The king was at this time at Lusignan, and commanded that the examination should take place in his presence, and that all the indictments should be read over before him. Was it with a view to the justification of his oppressed servant, whose situation he now regarded with "late remorse" or was it in order that the delay of his condemnation should cease, and no obstacle exist to the disposal of his property?

The meanest subterfuges were resorted to by his inexorable judges to prove that Jacques Cœur had never undergone the tonsure, and consequently did, in no way, belong to the Church, notwithstanding the positive assertions of the three Bishops of Tours, Poitiers, and Bourges.

Driven to despair by the evident malignity of his father's judges, Jean Cœur, Bishop of Bourges, after using every effort to obtain access to the king and soften his ministers, repaired early in

the morning, on the eve of the judgment to be pronounced, to Geoffroy Garin, clerk and keeper of the royal seal at Poitiers, and caused a solemn act of appeal to be registered to this effect:—

"That it had come to his knowledge and cognizance, that certain haters and malevolent enemies of Jacques Cœur, his father, had striven to establish certain preventives to his deliverance, which malicious intents he could expose and make manifest: he appealed and would appeal there and in all places, as much as in him lay, and would make use of all the powers he possessed that might serve him, then and at all times."

But, in spite of every effort, iniquity gained its triumph. The king, from whom, even to the last doubtless, his family and friends looked for justice, —whose arrival at Lusignan, and examination of all the counts and papers connected with this sad affair, had raised hopes,—the king himself ordered the chancellor of France, Guillaume Juvenal des Ursins, to pronounce his sentence at the castle of Lusignan, the 19th May, 1453.

He was condemned as worthy of death, but, in consideration of his services to the king, his life was granted—the only mercy shewn. His goods were confiscated; he was declared incapable of ever holding any office in future; and decreed to make *amende honorable* bareheaded, without hood or belt, on his knees, holding in his hand a lighted torch weighing ten pounds of wax, by

confessing that he had wickedly, unlawfully, and against reason, presented and sent harness and arms to the soldan, enemy of the Christian faith,—that he had restored a child to the Saracens, and transmitted to them a great quantity of white money and gold, against the royal ordinances, and had caused by his extortions great distress and desolation in France: he was then to beg mercy of God and justice of the king.

On this subject Etienne Pasquier has some curious remarks in a letter to M. de Marilhac:—

"There is a remarkable expression in the sentence of Jacques Cœur, ordaining that he shall make the *amende honorable* 'sans *chaperon*,' which has caused my thoughts to go back to I know not what ancient time of France, which I cannot help entertaining you with at this moment, while you, at Ferrières, are no longer entertaining your fancies with your trees. Regarding the word *chaperon*, it was anciently used in the sense which we moderns apply to caps; we still say *chaperonner* for *bonneter*, and from our ancestors we have derived the expression 'two faces under one *hood*,' meaning that two persons understand each other.

"The sentence of Jacques Cœur specifies that he shall perform the *amende honorable* bare-headed, and without a hood. This was the ordinary mode of punishment to persons in his position; but he is ordered also to appear *without a girdle*, which I

never saw before in any sentence as far as I recollect. Why then should this command be added in this case? I will tell you. Our forefathers considered that in the girdle lay the general remembrance of all our possessions: whether for our support, our sustenance, our defence, we bore the emblem in our girdle, as the sword for the profession of arms, or the pen for men of the robe. At the girdle were worn the keys, the purse, or the ink-horn, according to the several necessities or occupations of the wearer. For this reason, when a man's goods were to be given up, he was compelled, before the face of the judge, to take off his girdle—a custom still in use in our days—not as a mark of infamy, but as an emblem of having abandoned all possession.

"My opinion therefore is, that the command of Jacques Cœur's appearing *without a girdle* was intended the more to express that all his worldly goods were taken from him—that all he had was at once confiscated."

He was commanded also to seek for and purchase the child who had been restored to the heathen, if he could be found, and cause him to be brought to Montpellier, or else to buy a Christian slave from the Sarasins, and have him brought to the said town.

A receipt for two thousand crowns, borrowed by the lords of La Fayette and Canillac, was decreed to have been falsely and maliciously

taken from them by Jacques Cœur, and was declared to be void.

One hundred thousand crowns falsely obtained from the king were to be restored, and a fine of three hundred thousand crowns paid over and above; until the discharge of which sums the prisoner was to remain in captivity.

Besides this, all that belonged to him was declared forfeited to the crown, and he was banished perpetually from the kingdom of France during the good pleasure of the king.

"With respect to the charge of poison," continues the sentence, "since we are not in a state at present to judge that matter, we shall pass it over for that reason."

It is remarkable that nothing whatever is said of any conspiracy with the dauphin throughout:—but there was sufficient to criminate one whose fate had been decreed from the first!

To this document Charles VII. put his hand and seal, and the enemies of the great merchant were content.

What is worthy to be observed, although the sentence sets forth that "in the affair of the poisoning" they cannot decide, yet the same day that this judgment was given against Jacques Cœur, the accusation of the Lady of Mortagne was declared false and calumnious, and she was condemned to the *amende honorable* towards him she had sought to injure, and to keep herself

away in future, ten leagues from any place inhabited by the king or the queen. Her life was granted, in consideration of great services rendered to the state by her predecessors and her husband.

So greedy were those who were to gain by the ruin of the argentier, that, the moment the papers were signed, the procureur-général of Parliament was sent to Jacques Cœur in his prison at Poitiers, commanding him instantly to pay the fines, which amounted to about four millions of the present money of France. The prisoner represented that all he was worth would not produce so much, and he had no resource but to entreat the king to have pity on him and his poor children. By this he doubtless meant the ready money in his possession: indeed, as all his estates and goods were already seized, he could not expect to raise any sums on them; they were, however, estimated at no less than twenty millions.

If anything were required to show the futility of that part of the charge which accused Jacques Cœur of desiring to injure the Christian interests, or to slight or cast reproach on the Catholic church, it would be enough that the most powerful persons in the Church itself were his most determined defenders and supporters. That his son, the Bishop of Bourges, should have exerted every energy in his favour, is not surprising; but it is remarkable that a large body of the clergy did the same, and that at their head was the Pope him-

self. Indeed, but for this powerful advocacy, it is possible that both torture and death would have been the portion of the unfortunate prisoner.

Twenty-five days elapsed after his condemnation, and he was still kept in prison. At length the commissioners arrived at Poitiers, having the chancellor of France at their head, to announce the decision.

The Church then made a fresh effort to spare Jacques Cœur the last humiliation with which he was threatened. Pierre de Chaumont, abbé of St. Cyprien, and Jean Tripault, vicar-general and official, deputed by the bishop, addressed the chancellor and the other members of the great council of the king, assembled at the judgment-hall of the palace, and demanded the body of Jacques Cœur, exhibiting the letters which declared him a subject of the Church. No answer was at first deigned them, and when they returned again, they were refused access to the hall, which was open to every body else. They were constrained to remain alone in an outer chamber, where two of the commissioners, Hugues de Couzay, lieutenant of the seneschal of Poitou, and Hélie de Tourette, lieutenant of Saintonge, came to ask what their demand was, and to signify to them, that, if it regarded their request of the day before, they were directed to say that they could not enter the council chamber, nor speak to the lords on any such subject.

The deputies replied, that their demand was just and reasonable; that, if Jacques Cœur had offended, the Church, to whom he belonged, was ready to punish him, but that they protested against the power to do so being taken out of their hands, and appealed against the justice of the decision. They moreover supplicated that the sentence of Jacques Cœur should be suspended at least till they had an answer from the king, to whom a deputation from the Bishop of Poitiers was gone to entreat his consideration.

No representations, however, took effect: the claims of the Church were derided; all supplications, entreaties, and appeals were unheeded, and the innocent and unfortunate victim of cupidity was brought forth from his dungeon to make sport for his enemies.

After twenty-two months' imprisonment Jacques Cœur was forced, in the presence of an immense concourse of spectators, to go through all the humiliating ceremonies of his sentence—a sentence pronounced at the close of a trial which had pursued him from castle to castle, was illegally carried on, and in which witnesses summoned at the beginning were dismissed before the end, no one accuser confronted with another, and the first commissioners having given place to new ones.

Each of the judges in this unjust cause obtained a large share of the booty. Jean Dauvet,

procureur-général, who had the charge of selling all the estates and effects of the condemned, came in for a rich share; but the largest was awarded to the illustrious warrior and champion, Antoine de Chabannes Count of Dammartin. This portion was the castle of St. Fargeau, and the baronies of Toucy and Perreuse, that is to say, almost all the land in the district known as La Puisaie, consisting of more than twenty parishes.

Guillaume Gouffier, the high chamberlain, had ten thousand crowns' worth of land and the lordship of La Motte, that of Boissy, and half of that of Roanne and Saint Aon.

As for large sums of money due to Jacques Cœur, the king permitted the payment to stand over at his pleasure.

Besides the estates already mentioned, the rest of the enormous possessions of the argentier are thus enumerated by La Thaumassière in his history of Berry :—

"His house at Bourges called La Chaussée.

"His house at Montpellier called La Loge, and two others.

"At Lyons, a dwelling called La Rose, one called La Maison Ronde, and three others.

"At Marseilles, the Maison de Ville, built by him.

"At Beaucaire, the Maison de Ville.

"At Beziers, several houses and grounds.

"At Saint Pourçain, one house.

"At Sancerre, one house.

"The estate of St. Gerant de Vaux, bought from Philip de Bourbon and his wife.

"The heath of Aubépin.

The villages of Barlieu, Ainay-le-Viel, Meaune, Villemot, Le Lis Saint Georges, Marmagnes, Maubranches; La Feillane, in the châtellanie of Murat; Meneton Salon, in Berry.

"The mines of Chifflice.

"The mines of Saint Pierre le Palud.

"The silver mines of Pompalieu."

Two houses at Paris are also named: one on the spot where part of the Palais Royal now stands, and one some remains of which are still to be seen in the Rue de l'Homme Armé. This latter house was not completed at the time of his downfall, and was continued by Jean de la Balue, Bishop of Angers and Evreux, whose fortunes were as unstable as those of the first builder. The style of its construction excited much wonder at the time, and the bricks were thought to be of some rich metal; they were in fact no more than glazed tiles, but, being uncommon, were looked upon with much awe and surprise.

The president Barillon afterwards inhabited this house, adding another to the list of those whose misfortunes seemed to condemn the dwelling as unlucky:—Jacques Cœur ruined and exiled; Balue shut up in a cage of iron for eleven

years by Louis XI.; and Barillon, long a captive, and at length dying in the citadel of Pignerol.

Another fine chateau possessed by Jacques Cœur was that of Beaumont, in the Gatinais, which passed by inheritance to the family of Harlay, and from them to the Prince of Tingry, for whom the estate was erected into an hereditary duchy. There is said to be still in this castle some portions belonging to the time of Jacques Cœur, and some curious tapestry of his period.

One of the letters of Etienne Pasquier on the subject of Jacques Cœur is very interesting, as showing the opinion entertained in his time, namely, about a century after the event, of the trial of the celebrated merchant, and also as exhibiting the estimation in which he was held. The letter is addressed to "M. de Marilhac, Seigneur de Ferrières, conseiller du roi, et maistre ordinaire en sa chambre des comptes de Paris."

"It is indeed as you say: I imagine that France never produced a man, who by his industry, without any particular favour of the prince, arrived at so much eminence and riches as Jacques Cœur.

"He was, in his way, both king and emperor; and, as we discover the grandeur of old Rome by its ruins, I may say the same of him.

"It may justly be remarked of that great Constable de Luxembourg, under Louis XI., that he

was another Jacques Cœur amongst princes; and Jacques Cœur, under Charles VII., amongst persons of middle rank, was another Constable de Luxembourg. Both one and the other commanded princes and maintained each his own grandeur; and in the end both received the usual reward accorded by the great to those who serve them—the one suffering an ignominious death, and the other condemned to an *amende honorable*, and the general loss of all his possessions. At the same time, neither the one nor the other was so unfortunate as that his posterity did not become powerful: for the Constable de Luxembourg's eldest son's daughter was afterwards allied by marriage with one of the first princes of France, and left great wealth; and Jacques Cœur had also a grand-daughter, who, in consequence of her riches, was united in marriage to one of the first families in Paris.

"As for his sentence, but that it is on record, I should say it was altogether a calumny; but I cannot speak falsely in reporting, that it was the jealousy of the great men of Charles VII.'s court, which concocted this tragedy."

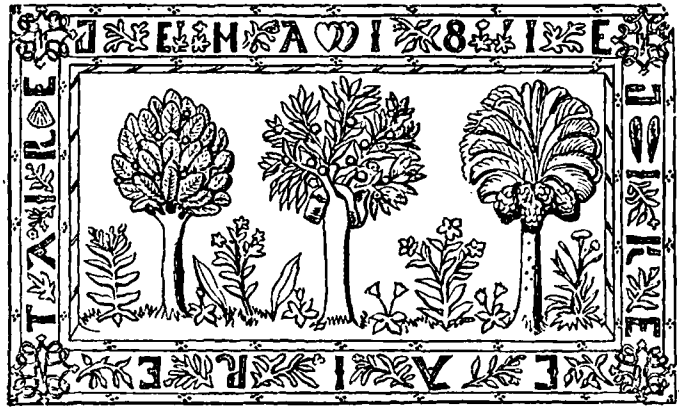
After detailing the particulars of the trial, Etienne Pasquier goes on to remark:—

"Judge, I pray you, if I were not right in saying that he was a monarch in his way, since one of the chief points of his accusation was a correspondence which he had with the Soldan of

Egypt; and remark also, that the Pope became the principal intercessor with the king, that his life might be spared. And again, perhaps, the most marvellous part of the story is, that after his condemnation there should be found sixty or eighty men, his ancient servants, who through his means had become possessed of great wealth, who were ready to lend him each a thousand crowns to aid him to overcome his difficulties, so that he was able after a time to re-establish his fortunes. This service, be it remembered, not being founded on any other ground than the obligations they owed their master, for his goodness to them in the days of his prosperity.

"Nothing is more surprising than that a simple citizen should have been able to create such a fund of gratitude, except that beings so grateful should be found to remember him in his adversity.

"It may well be said of him, that he was another Alexander, who produced many kings."



CHAPTER XXIX.

JEAN DE VILLAGE. — HONESTY. — BEAUCAIRE. — THE LETTER. — THE BROTHER. — THE TABLETS. — THE FACTORS. — THE BOAT. — ESCAPE. — THE POPE. — SICKNESS. — DEATH OF POPE NICOLAS. — HIS SUCCESSOR. — SETTLEMENT OF AFFAIRS.

From the time that the unjust sentence was passed against Jacques Cœur, a veil of uncertainty has fallen over him, which historians have in vain endeavoured to remove. The probable events of his future life may be thus recorded, for they have satisfied the most zealous of his biographers, M. de Bonamy.

Amongst the three hundred factors whom the great merchant employed, there seems to be none but those two who deposed against him that he had sent back a slave to the Sublime Porte, who were not faithful to their generous and trusting master; and amongst those at the head of their

large body, few stood more prominent, as an intrepid and worthy friend of the founder of all their fortunes, than Jean de Village, whom he had brought up as his own son, and had married to his neice.

When the harpies of the law, armed with powers from the monarch who had betrayed a trusting friend, arrived in Languedoc, greedy to seize the vessels belonging to the ruined man, Jean de Village was then in charge of great stores of merchandise belonging to his master. Thunderstruck at the blow which had fallen upon him, he resolved to resist the commissioners who claimed the vessels in the king's name. He insisted upon having a formal discharge, signed, not only by the king's own hand, but by that of his master, and resolutely defied his enemies to attempt taking possession of a single bale under his care.

Before there was time for the enraged agents to send a statement of their grievances to the king, Jean de Village had sailed away to Marseilles, which was out of the jurisdiction of France, and there he claimed protection from the good King René of Provence.

At first he was secure, but a peremptory requisition soon arrived from the government of France, desiring that René should withdraw his countenance from the champion of Jacques Cœur, and should immediately arrest his wife and chil-

dren, and seize on the goods and possessions of Jean de Village, who had only time to make a hasty flight and save himself in a foreign country.

After his condemnation, since there was now nothing more, apparently, to be gained by keeping him in prison, Jacques Cœur was permitted by the king to remove from his dungeon at Poitiers to Beaucaire, to a convent of Cordeliers, where he was ordered to remain as a prisoner at large, *under the safeguard of the king*, a term which by no means implies that he was at liberty to leave this retreat when he wished it. He remained at Beaucaire for eighteen months, for it seems tolerably well ascertained that he was there in 1455.

To a mind like his this inactivity and restraint must have been intolerable; at first the stunning nature of the blow might have paralysed his feelings, but as time wore on they would recover their tone, and hope spring up once again. After his long captivity he began to shake off the burthen of grief and despair which had pressed upon him, and resolved to make every effort he could devise to recover his liberty.

From amongst the brotherhood he selected one whom he gained over to his interests, and who succeeded in conveying a letter to Marseilles, which he found means of forwarding to Jean de Village.

With what emotion must that faithful friend have read the letter of his imprisoned master, which entreated him for the love of God to take

pity on his condition, and to find some means of saving his life, by removing him from his present bondage.

The particulars of his conduct were afterwards related to Charles VII. by Jean de Village himself, who sets forth, that, "considering that he was both a servant and a connexion of Jacques Cœur, that all the worldly goods he possessed were entirely resulting from his protection and countenance, and that common rumour having bruited the report that a reconciliation was about to take place between him and the king, he did not consider that he was committing an act that could be blamed, by withdrawing him from the inveteracy of his enemies."

Whether the report of the king's being disposed to restore his ancient friend to his favour was really spread abroad or not, it was perhaps policy in Jean de Village to assume it: if it were indeed so, Charles would appear more sinned against than sinning; and, but that he appropriated the great wealth of his ruined subject to his own uses, it might be suspected that he was not a free agent throughout the disgraceful transaction.

At all events, Jean de Village, the instant he received his master's letter, and thus ascertained where he was confined, at all risks to himself, repaired to Tarascon, a town situated on the Rhone, opposite Beaucaire. He there lodged at a convent of Cordeliers, who agreed to receive him,

perhaps not altogether ignorant of his motives in coming.

One of the monks consented to apprise Jacques Cœur of his arrival, and, under pretence of paying a visit to the monks of Beaucaire, he found means to get speech of their prisoner. To this monk the master of Jean de Village confided some tablets, on which he had traced words to the effect, that, "relying on him as on his son, he entreated him to deliver him, for he had reason to fear that it was meditated to put him to death unknown to the king."

Startled and terrified at this announcement, Jean hastened to assure him, by the intervention of the monk, that he would never cease his endeavours to set him at liberty, and bade him be of good cheer and hope the best. He consoled him with the great probability of his success, as he had the power of occasionally leaving the convent, and, in spite of the watch kept over him, he trusted that he should discover, by the help of God, the means he desired.

Jean returned with all diligence to Marseilles, and communicated his design to two other of Jacques Cœur's factors, who were natives of Bourges, and devoted to their master. Their names were Guillaume Gymart and Gaillardet; both had been obliged to fly when Jacques Cœur was arrested, and were concealed under the protection of René of Anjou. Jean found in these men

ready coadjutors, and they encouraged his hopes and offered him their utmost assistance. They soon managed to get together nineteen or twenty determined men, firm in their interests, who had been soldiers in the late wars. Jean de Village had at his command several armed galleys, and these he placed in readiness, after which he, his two companions and his small body of troops, took their way to Beaucaire, where they lay concealed till the friendly monk had informed Jacques Cœur of their vicinity, and appointed him to leave the convent after having as usual heard matins, which ceremony took place at midnight.

A difficulty now presented itself: the town of Beaucaire was surrounded by walls, and at first this seemed a formidable barrier to his escape; but one of the soldiers of the party was aware of a breach in a certain part, which it was easy to enlarge so that they could pass through.

They now obtained a boat which they hired, together with the necessary instruments for working at the wall, and in the darkness of night cautiously crossed the river Rhone and silently pursued their labour, which they found easier than they had imagined. The breach was made sufficiently large for them to pass through, and while some remained as sentinels at the foot of the wall, Jean de Village and others stole to the convent, where, as soon as matins were over, to their infinite satisfaction they descried their mas-

ter advancing towards them. Without a word or a moment's delay they hurried him off to the boat, which re-crossed the river without being challenged. With the utmost speed they then pursued their way across the country to Tour de Bouc, a little Provençal port, where Jean de Village had ordered one of his galleys to be lying ready. With trembling delight he saw his master and all his little band on board, and now he felt that he might congratulate him on his escape. They reached Marseilles safely and there landed, and for greater security carried him by land to Nice. Another galley was waiting there, which, with a favourable wind, bore them away to Pisa, and from thence Jacques Cœur pursued his uninterrupted way to Rome.

Jacques Cœur was received with the utmost cordiality and welcome by Nicolas V., the reigning Pope, to whom he had formerly gone as ambassador with so splendid a train, at the time when he stood higher in the favour of fortune and the king than any man in France. Nicolas entertained for the liberal and enlightened merchant, whose feelings were congenial with his own, a disinterested and sincere attachment. He had heard of his ruin with deep regret, and had written in the most urgent manner in his favour to Charles VII., who had not, however, listened to his remonstrances, except as far as granting him his life.

No doubt he was prepared by Jean de Village to expect his friend, and their mutual satisfaction was extreme when the captive arrived safely in his dominions. Pope Nicolas would allow him to lodge nowhere but in his own palace; and, established there, he once more felt himself free. But his long confinement, his distress of mind, and his recent anxiety and fatigue, brought on a severe illness, which threatened his life: he was throughout the crisis attended with the greatest care by the physicians of the Pope, who paid him frequent visits, and took the liveliest interest in his recovery.

Scarcely had he risen from his bed of sickness and begun to enjoy the delight of thanking his kind protector, and of being comforted in his society, when Nicolas himself fell ill. So sudden was the attack, and so rapid its effects, that his death, which almost immediately followed, was by many attributed to poison; but other historians consider his demise to have been caused by the gout, to which he had long been subject, and a fever, brought on by agitation of mind, occasioned by his regret at the taking of Constantinople.

He had reigned eight years over the Church, and had restored peace to Italy. He was the protector of the arts he loved, and a man of accomplished manners and enlightened mind. He was the founder of the library of the Vatican, and

enriched it with many valuable manuscripts in Greek and Latin. So great was his liberality, that he offered the sum of five thousand ducats to any one who should bring him the Gospel of Saint Mathew in Hebrew. He began several superb edifices for the embellishment of Rome, and adorned the churches of his capital with splendid tapestries and rich vessels of gold and silver.

His disinterestedness equalled his liberality and piety: out of his private purse he spared sums to endow indigent young persons with marriage portions; and his reign, one of singular purity, exhibited no examples of the sale of any office.

He was a man superior to the age in which he lived, and worthy of the friendship of the most exalted persons of his time. Few circumstances speak more for the character of Jacques Cœur than the friendship of this excellent prelate for him, and deeply and deservedly was he regretted by the ill-used minister of the fickle and feeble-minded, if not ungrateful, King of France.

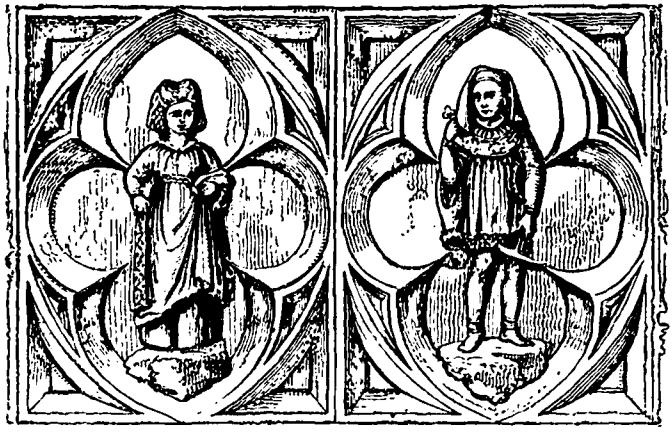
The asylum that Jacques Cœur had found in Rome was not, however, lost to him by the death of Nicolas; and he found himself in security and undisturbed, able to attend to his affairs, and examine the state of his revenues left in charge of his various factors, who, faithful to their trust, had continued to trade in his name during his misfortunes, and had kept up a commercial intercourse with several merchants in Italy and the

Levant. His interests had been by no means neglected; and, notwithstanding the confiscation of his property in France, he found that his resources were not exhausted, and he was still in a condition to retrieve much of his ill-fortune.

Jean de Village did not allow a very long time to elapse before he rejoined his master at Rome. "There," according to his own statement, "he had a strict conference with him respecting all the charge and administration of his galleys and merchandise, and all the transactions which he had conducted."

They then agreed to a division of the profits of their commercial ventures, and parted from each other mutually content and satisfied; the factor happy in the discharge of his duty, and the master in the proof of his servant's honour and attachment. Blest must Jacques Cœur have been in all his sorrows, to find that he

> had a steward so just, and now
> So comfortable!



CHAPTER XXX.

SIEGE OF CONSTANTINOPLE.—LOSS.—THE APPEAL TO CHRISTENDOM.—LETTER.—THE VOW.

At the time that Jacques Cœur sought the hospitality of Nicolas V., the Pope's mind was occupied with great designs, which had for their object the re-capture of Constantinople from the Turks; and doubtless not a little regret mixed with the sorrows of his friend, that he was no longer able to assist the Church with a portion of that wealth which had formerly preserved the knights of Rhodes from the attacks of the Infidel.

It was at the very time, some say on the very day, that the iniquitous sentence on Jacques Cœur was pronounced, that Constantinople fell a prey to Mahomet II.; the date of that great event being 29th of May, 1453, when the imperial city was taken from the last of the Cæsars, after a de-

termined siege of fifty-one days, and after being defended with incredible courage by inferior numbers, and resources which made the hope of success almost hopeless.

Amurath II., one of the greatest princes of the Ottoman race, had left his throne to his son Mahomet II., called by his subjects Mahomet the Equitable, then only twenty-two years of age, full of spirit, courage, and enterprise, and bent upon obtaining a name, higher even than that of his father, by a conquest on which every energy of his mind was set; all his genius and knowledge, which was extensive and shining, had but one goal, and that was to establish himself on the throne of Constantinople, and to drive the Christians from those walls which they had too long profaned.

Ferocious and inexorable as he was bold and resolute, no obstacles deterred him, and no exertions were considered too extraordinary. He brought to the attack of the city by land an army of three hundred thousand men, and on the side of the sea a fleet of more than a hundred galleys, and a hundred and thirty other vessels; while the besieged could not muster more than five thousand Greeks and two thousand foreigners capable of military service.

The Turkish relation of this siege is conceived in a true Oriental spirit; the historian, Saad-Eddin Effendi, opens his account with the following poetical preface:—

"The season of snows, of ice, and of storms was past; soft spring had succeeded, and had already decorated the meadows: the rose, like a shy beauty, allowed part of her charms to appear; the amorous nightingale began her soft complaints; the earth, covered with a green carpet, seemed to wait for the legions of Mahomet the Equitable. Soon the tents of the Mussulmans arose in the midst of the flowery meads; the hills and the valleys were honoured with the presence of the troops of the faith."

The command of his troops was given by the Christian Emperor to the brave Genoese general, Jan Justiniani, but the inhabitants of the city were more occupied with vain disputes than the defence of their country, and abandoned themselves by turns to blind security and cowardly despair. Now they placed their reliance on a false oracle, that announced the end of the empire of the East as having arrived, and anon listened with credulous eagerness to a prophecy which proclaimed that the Turks, when they had once arrived at the column of Justinian, would be all at once exterminated by an avenging angel, who would descend from heaven for that purpose.

An enormously strong iron chain, sustained at distances by heavy stone blocks, fixed in the water, closed the entrance of the port to the efforts of the enemy, and presented an insurmountable barrier to their approach. The genius

of Mahomet, however, discovered an expedient which set that formidable obstacle at nought. He conceived the bold project of causing the vessels which he had at the port which he had constructed, to be conveyed to the port behind Galata.

He had many able mechanicians in his employ, who exerted their powers to the utmost, and the result was, that the immense vessels of the Mussulmans were fixed on carriages, which being properly greased and prepared, were made to slide over the unequal ground, and were thus borne along till they reached the opposite shore, and were launched on the waves that bathed the ramparts of the town.

The monks had meanwhile encouraged the besieged by recounting a prophecy to this effect: "That the taking of Constantinople was impossible, because it had been revealed by astrological indications, that the city would only be conquered by a sovereign whose vessels should glide over the earth with sails unfurled."

And now a wood comes toward Dunsinane!

"When the unbelievers," says Solak-Zadeh, "saw this marvel, they understood that their ruin was accomplished; speech was arrested in their mouths, and the flame of despair was illumined in their hearts!"

This great achievement accomplished, Mahomet

caused a bridge to be erected on these vessels, and covered it with entrenchments. He then commanded his army to place on the extremities of their pikes and lances lanterns and tapers, and gave the word, that, "while the star of the fourth heaven cast its rays on the earth," his warriors should continue to combat, in order not to leave "to the contemptible unbelievers" a moment's rest or time to repair their breaches. It was not surprising that the resolute Infidels soon saw the standard of the Prophet floating on the walls of conquered Constantinople. To use their own inflated language, "Soon the gates and the ramparts of Constantinople, *like to the heart of an unfortunate lover*, were pierced in a thousand places." They compare the effect of the lamps and tapers, reflected on the surrounding country, to a field covered with roses and tulips.

The Turkish historian dwells with complacency on the feats performed by the soldiers of the Prophet. "The sun had now risen from the shades of the west, and having put to flight, with the darts and lances of his rays, the legions of stars, the general of the deceitful Franks mounted the ramparts, in order to drive back the cohorts of the faith. At the same moment, a young Mussulman, *holding the cord of firm resolution, sprang like a spider* on the walls, and having swung round his sword, like the crescent moon, with a single stroke he made the *owl-like soul* of

this infidel fly forth from the nest of his impure body."

Twenty times did the Emperor Constantine throw himself into the midst of his enemies, sword in hand: overwhelmed by numbers, he fell pierced by a hundred wounds, and had at least the glory of dying in defence of the altars of his God, and for the wreck of that empire which had given laws to the universe. His death was glorious, and he was worthy of a better fate.

Then came the horrors of success; then came the fatal consummation of the promise made to his soldiers by the Mahomedan chief: for three days Constantinople was given up to pillage and excess, and Europe trembled at the recital of deeds done in that interval. More than forty thousand people fell beneath the sword of the victors, and sixty thousand were sold as slaves, or paid their ransom by their weight in gold.

At the news of this appalling event, all nations were seized with terror and consternation; the boast and threat of Mahomet II., that he would set no bounds to his conquests, but would overrun Greece, Italy, France, and the whole of the West, was heard with a shudder, and Europe stood for a time paralysed at the extent of his daring and the success of his arms.

"By the care of the fortunate monarch," says the Turkish chronicler, "the dust of the combat was laid, the sword of the warrior was suspended,

arrows were thrown away, and bows were broken. By his generous efforts, one might hear, instead of the detestable noise of bells, the profession of the Mussulman faith, and the cry, five times a day repeated, of the religion of the Prophet from the heights of the minarets. The churches of Constantinople were despoiled of the idols which desecrated them; they were purified from Christian impurity.

"The ancient customs were entirely changed: several temples and chapels of the Nazarenes, by the placing of the *mihrab* and the seat of the faithful, rivalled the celestial Paradise. The luminous rays of Islamism dissipated the sombre darkness of the wicked.

"After this enchanted spot, which excites the jealousy of the green citadel of heaven, had been for so many years filled with *insects and reptiles*, it became, by the grace of the Creator, the dwelling of the favoured; and the key of this country, newly conquered, opened the lock of many a difficult thing."

Nicolas V. saw all these rapid events with agony; he felt and trembled at the danger which threatened the Church, and lost no time in appealing to all the sovereigns in Christendom for aid against the enemies of religion. His legates were dispatched to every court, and ordered to set forth the necessity of immediate exertion.

The messenger sent to the Duke of Burgundy

arrived at Lille at the moment Philip le Bon was celebrating the victories which he had gained over the rebellious inhabitants of Ghent, and the peace which he had granted them. The duke was forcibly struck with the picture placed before his eyes of the rapine and desolation committed in the city of Constantinople by the Turks, and having, at the same time, received a message from the Emperor of Germany inviting him to repair to Ratisbon, in order to assist at a consultation for the good of Christendom, he resolved to devote himself to that cause.

He accordingly, at the close of his rejoicings, made a solemn vow to God, the Virgin, the ladies, and the pheasant, that, if the good pleasure of the most Christian king was to take the cross in defence of the Catholic faith, and to resist the enterprises of the Infidels, he would give his services and his power, and would, if required, himself take command of the army. His son, the Count de Charolois, took the same vow, and all the princes of his family and the lords of his court followed the example set them by their chiefs.

If it had been according to the manners of the fifteenth century to turn into ridicule, as in our own times, every circumstance of a public and political nature which occurred, it would not be unreasonable to suppose that the letter forwarded by the Pope to the court of Burgundy

and to other courts, in order to excite their zeal against the Infidels, was the composition of one of the privileged jesters of the period, and intended to amuse the world at the expense of the ignorant knights, who, probably unable to read the missive themselves, would listen with flashing eyes, and mailed hands grasping their swords, to the daring remonstrance of

> The foul Paynim,
> Who believeth on Mahound;

and, drawing a long breath after the message of the "heathen hound" to the holy father of Christendom was concluded, would swear on the pheasant to do deeds of yet unheard of valour against miscreants, who prayed not only to the false traitor Mahomet, but paid their vows to Jupiter and Neptune!

If almost all the chroniclers of the day had not mentioned this circumstance, and several had not given the letter, it would seem that so weak an invention could have gained no credit with thinking people, even in an age so ignorant as that in which it occurred. Those, of course, who were well aware of its futility, had their reasons for not enlightening their neighbours, and the letter passed as genuine; yet it may be surmised that the flimsy deception was seen through by many, and their zeal cooled towards the cause in consequence, by the unfavourable result of the

appeal, which was not responded to by a quarter of the persons who were ready enough to take part in the festivities consequent upon the vows.

The following is the letter brought by the messengers of the Pope, and read to the assembled court:—

"*Letter of the Grand Turk to Pope Nicolas.*

"Morbesant, Hoprevant, together with his brothers Callabilabra, collateral knights of the empire of Organcy, lord of the peninsula of Achæia, to the high priest of Rome, our well-beloved, according to his deserts.—"It is come to our knowledge, that, at the request of the Venetian people, you have published in all the churches of Italy, that all those who make war with us shall have full pardon in this world and life eternal in the next. This we have been informed by certain pilgrims of the cross who have lately crossed the seas in ships from Venice; at which we feel much surprise; for if God has given you such power, you ought to use it more reasonably, without exciting Christians to make war on us, being, as we are, certain that our predecessors have always maintained that never were they consenting to your Jesus Christ being crucified, and as we have not the Holy Land in our possession, and have always hated the Jews since we heard, by history and chronicles, that from envy and treason they

put your said prophet into the hands of Pilate, president in Jerusalem for the Romans, who caused him to die on the cross. And, on the other hand, we are greatly displeased that the Italians should make war on us, since we entertain a natural love to them, for they are, as it were, a part of ourselves, as well as all their glory, power, and name, coming from Antenor, of the lineage of the great Priam, once lord of Troy, the great chief of the Turkish nation: as such, as his descendant, we propose to re-edify the said city of Troy, and to revive the dominion of the same, and bring back to our obedience the whole of Europe; and, in particular, in vengeance for the blood of Hector shed, and the subversion of the noble city of Troy, and the pollution of the great temple of Pallas, we have subjugated all Greece, and the inhabitants of the same, as successors and heirs of those who caused the destruction of Troy, as well as the lands belonging to the Venetians, by force taken by them, but by right ours, as foretold in prophecy.

"We therefore pray and require of your prudence, that henceforth you will refrain from issuing such bulls, and desist from exciting the Christians to make war on us, for we by no means wish to fight against them on account of their faith and belief, but only for the maintenance of the temporal right that we have to the said lands by conquest; for though we do not adore Jesus

Christ, we confess and acknowledge that he is your prophet. And, besides, we have often heard, that in your law it is forbidden to commit force: now we do not make war on the Venetians but by just right, because, without authority of prince or lord, they by their will and force have usurped the lands which they claim in Europe, which we neither can nor will suffer.

" Thus, since the promised time is nearly come, we are deliberating to rescue the said lands from the tyranny of the Venetians, more especially as the said Venetians do not act in concert with the other nations of Italy, but think themselves greater than the rest, for which cause, *by the aid of the great god Jupiter*, we intend to bring down their pride, and reduce them altogether.

" Nevertheless, if, in spite of all we have set forth, you do not cease moving the nations to war, we shall certainly exert all our power, and have recourse *to the Emperor of Orguant*, and the other princes and kings of the East, who have hitherto feigned to sleep, and have not warred against you; and we will assemble so great a power that it will be impossible to resist us; not only directing it against your pilgrims of the cross which you have sent, but, if you excite against us the Gauls and the Latins, we will resist all their powers *by the aid of Neptune, god of the sea;* and by the power of our said navy we will conquer *the isle of Lesponte*, and by that means en-

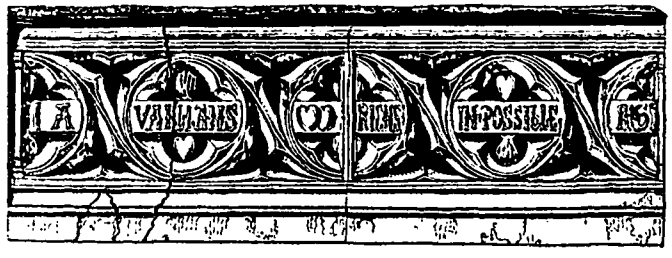
ter into Croatia and Dalmatia, and the regions of Acquilon.

"Given in our triumphant palace, in *the tenth year of Mahomet*, in the month of June."

This absurd epistle, in which the year of the Hegira 357 is transformed by the ignorant composer into the year 10, was sent forth with great ceremony, and would have been as likely to answer its purpose as a genuine letter, but for the pre-occupation of mind of most of the European princes at this period.

When the knight who was its bearer had delivered it to the Duke Philip of Burgundy, he was treated with high honour, and was assured that no means should be neglected that could bring about the reduction of the pagan pride and assumption. He also hastened to dispatch four galleys, laden with ammunition, to the holy father, and presented the messenger with rich gifts.

Every occasion at this period was made a pretext for fêtes and tourneys; and such an one as now presented itself was not to be neglected. Lille, therefore, became the scene of gorgeous festivities; and as several princes of rank were then at the Duke of Burgundy's court, they all vied with each other in display and splendour, in honour of the vows to be made to extirpate the enemies of the Christian faith.



CHAPTER XXXI.

THE BANQUET. — CHECK. — THE CAPTAIN-GENERAL. — SCIO. — VARIOUS ACCOUNTS. — ROMANCE. — LETTER TO THE KING. — RESTITUTION.

NOTHING comparable to the splendour of these rejoicings at Lille had ever been seen before: the fêtes were announced in January, at a banquet given by the Duke of Cleves, where the Duke of Burgundy was a guest.

The heralds proclaimed a solemn joust in the name of the Knight of the Swan, Adolphus, brother of the Duke of Cleves, and nephew of Philip le Bon.

The grand prize of valour was to be a golden swan, bearing a gold chain adorned with rubies, and this was to be presented to the fortunate knight by the ladies.

In an *entremet* at this banquet was introduced a vessel in full sail, in which stood a knight whose armour was the blazon of Cleves, having a silver

swan in a gold chain, which was attached to a collar round its neck. This figure was in allusion to a tradition, that a knight of old was conducted by a swan to the château of the lords of Cleves, on the Moselle, where he married the daughter of the châtelain, from whom the family descends.

Du Clercq is careful to tell the reader that the swan was simulated: it was "de la grandeur d'ung cheval, au moins la fachon, car c'étoit un homme vif dedans, lequel conduisait le dit chevallier à tout une longue chaine de fin or; et au costé du cigne alloient les fachons de deux hommes sauvages; et le chevallier étoit environné de gens *en forme d'aigles.*" The array must have been, on the whole, more comical than imposing, according to modern notions.

The Count de Charolois, son of the Duke of Burgundy, carried off the prize at the first day's tournament.

A chaplet of flowers designated the personage who was in his turn to give a banquet to the rest. On this night it was presented to the Count d'Estampes, who accordingly received his guests in great splendour ten days afterwards in his hotel at Lille.

This custom of wearing chaplets of flowers at banquets was common in the middle ages, and appears to be a remnant of the usages of the

ancients. In the romances of chivalry the knights are frequently represented as wearing garlands at grand entertainments, and roses were the flowers in the greatest request. It was usual, however, to wear wreaths of different kinds, and all were emblematic of certain qualities: green leaves, for instance, were supposed to typify purity; and damsels who came to request boons, or who were amongst the guests on particular occasions, wore white flowers.

The village of Fontenaye aux Roses, near Paris, took its name from the great commerce the inhabitants carried on with the capital; for almost all the roses furnished to Paris were grown there, an officer of the court, called Rosier de la Cour, whose duty it was to provide roses for festivals, being supplied from this place.

At the second banquet the chief *entremet* that appeared represented a chamber, from whence a concourse of persons were issuing, each holding a lighted torch: an officer followed, dressed in a coat of arms. After him walked two knights dressed in long robes of black velvet, each holding in his hand a chaplet of flowers. They preceded a beautiful young lady, of the age of twelve years, dressed in violet-coloured silk, richly embroidered in gold; her long fair hair hanging loose, and over her head-dress a veil, enriched with precious stones. She was riding on a white palfrey, covered with housing of blue silk, which was led

by three attendants in red silk, wearing on their heads bonnets of green. This lady represented Joy: the officer presented her to the Duke of Burgundy. By a step arranged on purpose, she was able to mount to the table, and having approached the Duke, she received from him a kiss, and returned with the same ceremony as she had advanced.

Among the *entremets* at other banquets, the chroniclers of these fêtes mention one of the château de Lusignan, where, at the top of the highest tower, appeared the renowned fabled fairy Melusine, under the form of a serpent. It was "a serpent heart, hid with a flowering face," indeed, but a royal one, which had condemned to the dungeons of that castle the prisoner who so long languished there!

But one of the most striking of these pageants, and which had most reference to the request which Nicolas V. had sent, was that which exhibited the Church under the form of a mourning damsel in the power of a Saracen. This desolate fair one was made to address the Duke of Burgundy, and recount her sorrows, entreating his aid against her enemies.

After this the King-at-Arms, Toison d'Or, came forward, bearing a living pheasant, adorned with a collar of precious stones and pearls. Two knights and two ladies accompanied him; and on this bird, according to the custom of the day, the vows of the assembled lords were made.

"Then," adds the chronicler, "followed several games and mysteries, dances and mummeries; and after the said dances, each person retired to his hotel, and then went to bed."

Faithful to his promise, so solemnly made, Philip le Bon set out soon after for Germany, and everywhere met with a welcome worthy of him. But the Emperor Frederic, whether jealous and alarmed at these demonstrations, or that avarice suggested that the expense of the war would be great, failed to repair to Ratisbon, and indicated another rendezvous at Frankfort. He even feigned sickness, in order to avoid the necessity of receiving so magnificent a prince as the Duke of Burgundy.

Already had the Duke of Burgundy sent four galleys to the Pope, promising further succours, when the meeting of the princes took place at Frankfort, on the 29th September, 1455.

Æneas Sylvius, the historian, was then an ambassador of Frederic, and, after much consultation, all opposition ended, and it was unanimously agreed that the war should be carried on. At this very juncture news arrived of the death of Pope Nicolas.

Calixtus III., who succeeded him, was equally desirous of prosecuting this project, and all the monarchs of Europe professed their readiness to second his views. Nevertheless, their fine words remained without fulfilment: occupied with their

own quarrels, they delayed attending to dangers which they looked upon as chimerical, and the Pope found himself but little seconded in his warlike preparations. However, as he was furnished with two hundred thousand crowns by the treasury of the Church, levies which he made on the clergy, and money obtained by the preachers of the crusade, he was able to arm a fleet of sixteen galleys.

The command of this fleet was given to the patriarch of Aquila, and under his orders Jacques Cœur commenced a new career as captain-general; thus devoting himself to the service of the Church, and at once triumphantly refuting the calumny which charged him with having furnished arms to her enemies.

The intention of this fleet was to carry assistance to those islands nearest the Turkish possessions, Rhodes, Scio, Lesbos, Lemnos, and others, and to protect them by their presence. A contemporary author relates that they combined with pirates of various nations, and for three years ravaged the coasts of Asia Minor, and the islands which had fallen into the hands of the Turks.

It is said that in one of these expeditions the vessel in which Jacques Cœur sailed coming to the island of Scio, he fell sick, and landed there only to die, in the month of November, 1456; but Jacques de Clercq mentions in his chronicles that

his death occurred in that year at Rome, where he remarks that he lived honourably and in much splendour, although Charles VII. had seized all he had in France. "After his death," says the historian, "the king restored all his possessions to his heirs, and repented, and was much distressed and angry that ever he had been forced to put him in prison."

Chastellain, another chronicler of the fifteenth century, places the final scene of Jacques Cœur's career in the isle of Rhodes, where he represents his having arrived poor and spirit-broken, and soliciting to be received into an asylum for the destitute, where, in great humility of soul, and thorough repentance for his sins of omission in the time of his great fortune, he expired.

But an authority more worthy of credit is that of Jean d'Auton, the historian of Louis XII., who had lived in the strictest intimacy with the children of Jacques Cœur, and who was very likely to hear the facts of an event so interesting to them.

He recounts, after telling of an expedition of the French to the island of Mytilene in 1501, that the fleet stopped at Scio to land some invalids, several of whom died and were buried in the church of the Cordeliers; "in which place," he adds, "is buried the body of Jacques Cœur, in the centre of the choir of the said church."

This testimony altogether coincides well with

the letters of Charles VII., and the obituary of Saint Etienne de Bourges, which assert that Jacques Cœur died in combating against the Infidels at the head of the troops of the Church.

There is another more romantic close related by the traveller Thevet, and frequently cited. According to this account, Jacques Cœur established himself in the island of Cyprus, where he contracted a second marriage, and had two daughters, and these children were married and richly endowed by him, for he had made a second fortune, only inferior to his first. The name of his wife, Theodora, is even given. But there appears to be no foundation for the story, for in the numerous memorials presented to Charles VII. by the sons of Jacques Cœur, praying for a reversal of his sentence, no allusion whatever is made to these remarkable circumstances; and there is every reason to believe that his death really occurred not more than three years after his condemnation.

Had he lived long enough to have a second family grown up, the reproach attached to Charles VII. would be even greater than it is, that he could allow his former friend to exist in exile, and hold out no hand of justice or forgiveness to him; but if he really died so soon, there was probably no time for the king to be convinced of his innocence, and restore him to his former position.

His children never ceased to plead, but it was for the memory of their father, which, at length, they succeeded in re-establishing.

It has been related, that when, immediately on the arrest of Jacques Cœur, his goods of every description were seized by Jean Dauvet, the procureur-général of the Parliament, they were scarcely offered for sale, before Jean Cœur and the guardians of his brothers Renaud and Geoffrey protested against the proceeding, claiming their right, at least, to that part which had been brought by Macée de Léodepart, their mother. After some opposition this claim was at length allowed, but no other permitted, and an order issued making it criminal henceforth to object to the decision of the law.

At the distribution of their father's estates, his children, neverthess, entered their protest as to the legality of the act; but this did not prevent the Count de Dammartin and Guillaume Gouffier from obtaining castles and land; and perhaps the most unkind cut of all was, that the successor to Agnès Sorel in the affections of the fickle king, Antoinette de Meignelais, widow of the Sieur de Villequier, was allowed to buy, for the sum of eight thousand gold crowns, the lands of Meneton Salon, in Berry.

It was in the midst of all these distributions and appeals, that news arrived in France that Jacques Cœur was "past the tyrant's stroke,"

that death had put an end to his sorrows and privations, and that his memory and his wrongs were left to his royal friend to deal with according to his pleasure and remorse.

It is said that Jacques Cœur, before he died, wrote a letter to Charles, recommending his family to his consideration; and, if such was the case, it might have had an effect; at all events, the king at this period gave ear to the supplications of the Archbishop of Bourges and his brothers, and those of Guillaume de Varic, the faithful servant and factor of the injured merchant, whose possessions had been ruthlessly torn from him when his master's were appropriated.

By letters granted at Courcelles, near Souvigny, in Bourbonnais, 5th August, 1457, the king allowed the sons and servants of his late argentier to claim all his houses in the town of Bourges, together with all the lands and tenements belonging to him in Berry, which were not already sold, two houses at Lyons, the mines of silver, lead, and copper in the mountain of Pampalieu and Cosne, and the royal right in the mines of Chessieu, St. Pierre le Palud and Ros-sur-Tarare, without reserve.

To this was added a grant, which gives reason to imagine that Charles was aware of the greediness of those who had pounced upon all the wealth scattered in their way, and wished to make them disgorge a part:—

" Item, besides the above, the king gives by these presents to the said Renaud and Geoffrey, and to Guillaume de Varic, each a third part of all the debts, lawsuits, and furniture belonging to the late Jacques Cœur, as well by letters and schedules as by papers and other receipts of the said, wherever those debts or goods may exist, either in or out of the country, *which have not already been taken for the service of the king*, or disposed of for the benefit of those to whom he had awarded them. And the king authorizes the said Renaud, Geoffrey, and Varic to enter actions, demands, and claims to recover the said, as Jacques Cœur or Varic would have done before the sentence was passed."

In granting so much, the king expressly does so merely as a mark of his condescension, not allowing any claim, and still regarding Jacques Cœur as criminal; but there was no way but to agree to this, and no opposition was made by those to whom this meagre reparation was made.

This was all that the justice, feeling, or regret of Charles VII. ever afforded in recompense for the services of his faithful friend; and he allowed the question to be brought no more before him.

It was 1461, in July, that the triumphant monarch, who had regained his kingdom, had driven out all the enemies of France, had seen his dominion extended, his commerce flourish, and

his name respected throughout Europe,—it was at that beautiful season of summer, when all nature smiled around him, that Charles shut himself up in one of the towers of Mehun-sur-Yèvre, his favourite place of residence, where he had passed some of the happiest days of his checquered life in the society of his beloved Agnès and his devoted friend Jacques Cœur.

What was his position now? Agnès was dead,—Jacques Cœur was dead. Had he deserted his fair favourite before her death, as he had the man whom he allowed to be accused of causing it? If so, he must have looked with even more grief of heart towards the towers of Beau-Sire-aimé, where once those beacon-lights shone for him on the battlements of her he loved. He had no friend now with whom to consult—on whom to lean—to whom to tell the fears at which he shuddered; for the Dauphin Louis, rendered more hardened by years, and more wicked and undutiful than ever, he was well assured sought his life, and languished for his crown. He dared not satisfy the cravings of hunger, so persuaded was he that his household had been gained over by his unnatural son, and that poison lurked in every dish offered to him.

Even at that late moment, when all the world was receding from him, when he must have looked back to former days and former friends with regret, there was time for reparation of his ingra-

titude and injustice: he could have restored the name of Jacques Cœur, even if all his wealth was given into other hands, but he did not; and he

died and made no sign!

Charles VII. died, starved in his castle of Mehun-sur-Yèvre; and the wicked, unfeeling, but politic and astute dauphin, succeeded him as Louis XI.

This was the signal for another change of fortune, and Antoine de Chabannes, the adversary and enemy of Jacques Cœur, experienced the turn of her wheel. The new king looked upon him with unfriendly eyes, and listened to the renewed instances of the sons of Jacques Cœur, that justice should be done to the memory of their father, and his possessions restored to the rightful heirs.

The Archbishop of Bourges lost no time in preparing a memorial against the sentence which had condemned the argentier, and employed on the occasion seven of the most famous advocates in Paris. The papers produced were in such quantities, as, it is said, to amount to a *horse-load*, although the bishop only put forth the most important, with extracts from others, all of which he was ready to bring forward if required. Although he was well aware, as had been proved, that the former judges had suppressed and altered the testimonies in favour of the accused, the bishop was not content with referring to those proofs, but resolved that every

thing should be gone over again in the fullest manner.

The seven lawyers unanimously agreed that the injustice done was manifest, they differed only in their estimate of the means to procure the reversal of the sentence. Some thought, that, the decision having been pronounced by the king himself, against whom all appeal was interdicted, it would be advisable to obtain a writ of error, or to memorialise: others thought it dangerous to submit the cause to Parliament, because its members had so high an opinion of the late king, that they would raise difficulties in annulling a condemnation directed by persons in such high authority and in such great numbers; they advised that a petition should be presented to the king, entreating him merely, of his mercy and goodness, to restore the possessions of Jacques Cœur.

It was finally concluded that the archbishop and his brothers should recall the consent they had given to cease appealing, appeal anew, and demand the re-examination of the witnesses. This was granted by Louis XI., and the cause was pleaded with closed doors on the 20th May, 1462, when the innocence of Jacques Cœur, and the nullity of the procedure, was plainly set forth by the advocate Haslé: it was, however, objected, as had been foreseen by Ganay, the procureur du roi, that the late king had countenanced the

trial, and decided on it, and that the sentence passed had been executed by the advice of the princes of the blood, and presidents and councillors of the crown.

The court delayed their judgment and came to no decision, neither as to the legality of the protests, nor the letters granted by Louis XI. to the sons of the accused, and so the matter remained as unsatisfactory as before, although there was no doubt in the minds of any respecting the proper mode of settling this vexatious question.

Renaud Cœur in the meantime died, and the Archbishop of Bourges and the Deacon of Limoges, in their quality of ecclesiastics, relinquished their right to their father's property, probably wearied with the delays and disappointments to which they saw no end. There was now but one son left to assert his claims, and him they acknowledged as the head of the family. This was Geoffrey Cœur, who held the post of cup-bearer to Louis XI., and who appears to have enjoyed considerable favour with his singular master.

Antoine de Chabannes was now a prisoner in the Bastille, and the time seemed propitious for his interests. Geoffrey pleaded to the king his destitution, and entreated that the portion of his father's lands obtained by the count should be given back to him.

Whether Louis XI., who liked startling and stirring acts, although he would not appear to be

a party to them, secretly favoured his cup-bearer's enterprise, or whether it occurred without his knowledge, which is not likely, Geoffrey, without waiting for the result of a new trial, hurried to the province of La Puisaie, and with no other authority than that of the strong arm, seized upon all the lands, castles, fortresses, and goods of the Count de Dammartin, and thus, without more formality, reinstated himself in possession of what he might vainly have sued for by law during the remainder of his life.

The letters-patent granted him by Louis on this occasion, dated 1463, do not show that he by any means disapproved of the conduct of his cup-bearer. They are most satisfactory, as exculpating the memory of the father of Geoffrey, and establish his right to what the son had so unceremoniously gained.

The following are extracts from those letters, showing the light in which the act was viewed by the king:—

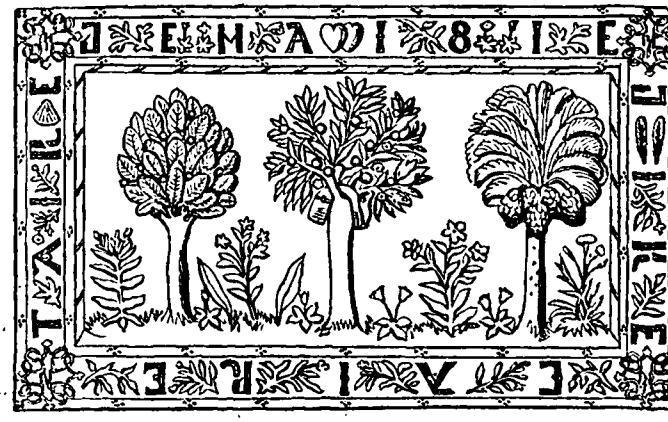
"Louis, by the grace of God King of France, &c.—It having come to our knowledge, that, by the false reports to our late dear lord and father, whom God absolve, regarding his argentier Jacques Cœur, made by his haters and ill-wishers, tending to despoil him of his wealth, and to enrich themselves with the same, and amongst others by means of Antoine de Chabannes, the said Jacques Cœur was made prisoner; and that

the said Antoine de Chabannes and others demanded and procured a confiscation of his goods, being at the same time his judges and accusers, and especially De Chabannes, who had the chief charge of him during his imprisonment, and the prosecution of his trial; and that, a judgment having been given against the said argentier, by the said De Chabannes and others, commissioners, the goods of Jacques Cœur were confiscated, and De Chabannes, under colour of a gift made to him, took possession of the lands and lordships of Saint Fargeau," &c., "in the district of Puissaie, which he enjoyed till the time of his arrest and imprisonment. And since, for certain crimes and misdemeanors, all the estates of the said De Chabannes are put under arrest and confiscated to our use; and since our dear and well-beloved *échanson*, Geoffrey Cœur, son and heir of the said Jacques Cœur, has made a remonstrance to us respecting the lands of De Chabannes, possessed by him against all law of our predecessors or ourselves, it appears to us that he has no title or valable right to them whatever. It has therefore pleased us to restore all the possessions of his late father to Geoffrey Cœur, having in memory the good and laudable services of the said Jacques Cœur, the true lord and possessor of the said estates, and desiring the good and well-being of our said *échanson*," &c.

"And let it not be understood that by this gift

any prejudice is to be done to Geoffrey Cœur, or other heirs of the late Jacques Cœur, regarding other rights and actions and lawsuits, for lordships and tenements belonging to their said father; for we will and declare our intention to be, and to have been, that the said Cœur and his brothers should remain entirely free in their right to prosecute those against whom they have commenced proceedings.

"In the third year of our reign, at Paris."



CHAPTER XXXII.

CHABANNES.—PEACE AND POLICY.—JACQUES CŒUR'S FACTORS.

It would seem as though the justice of kings was merely the result of caprice, so strange are the contradictions in their conduct. When Louis XI. first came to the crown, Antoine de Chabannes was at once disgraced. He was deprived of all his offices, shut up in the prisons of the Louvre for two years, transferred from thence to the Conciergerie, a sentence of banishment passed upon him, and his goods confiscated; but, not permitted even to take advantage of his sentence, to repair to some distant country where he might yet be free, he was placed in a dungeon in the Bastile.

From this latter durance he contrived to escape, and full of anger and resentment, he

hastened to join a conspiracy of the nobles, who, in 1464, armed themselves for what they termed "the public good."

It may easily be imagined, that, once at liberty, and at the head of an armed band, De Chabannes did not allow the good of the public to retard what he considered his own, and he marched straight from the Bourbonnais, which he had laid waste with fire and sword, with a strong body of troops, to St. Fargeau and St. Maurice, where he took possession of the lands and castles, and made Geoffrey Cœur his prisoner.

Not long after this the politic Louis made peace with the lords, and on this occasion De Chabannes was restored to power and hônour. He now commenced proceedings against Geoffrey, demanding not only the restitution of all the remainder of his ill-gotten estates, but two hundred thousand francs, which he asserted it would require to repair the damage done them.

Louis, meantime, who probably thought it more to his interest to favour De Chabannes than his cup-bearer, interfered no more in one case than in the other; the only act of consideration in which he indulged the family was, that he declined to receive homage from the count for the district of Puissaie during the lifetime of the Archbishop of Bourges. The death of the archbishop occurred in 1483, and that of the king in the same year.

In the next reign new trials and new pleadings arose, but no decision was vouchsafed, and both Geoffrey Cœur and the Count de Dammartin died without their claims being acknowledged; for thirty years had the law proceedings lingered on, until the heirs on either side became wearied out with delays, and came to a resolution to compromise the affair.

Jean de Chabannes, son of the late enemy of Jacques Cœur, and the widow and children of Geoffrey, agreed in 1489, in order to avoid the enormous expenses of continued proceedings, the one to pay, the other to receive, a yearly sum of four hundred livres.

Ten thousand crowns of gold were paid to the crown, and further litigation was at an end.

"Thus," says an historian writing on the subject, "all the reparation which, after death, the argentier of Charles VII. obtained, were a few barren crowns, in order that his descendants should not starve in a garret in Bourges, where he had erected palaces."

Perrette Cœur, the daughter of Jacques, married Le Sieur de Trousseau, who had the title of Vicomte de Bourges, to confer which was a right peculiarly belonging to the town; its judges in the law were the persons who were named as vicomtes, and the same custom exists in Normandy: in other parts of France these officers are called prevôts. Chénu, in his "Antiquités

et Privilèges de la Ville de Bourges," remarks that the Sieur de Trousseau probably held the vicounty as a feudal dignity, besides being a judge; as he observes, that, while he was Vicomte de Bourges, the king, Charles VII., had granted the prevôté of the town to Maître Lambert de Léodepart, in charge: this was, no doubt, a relation, by her mother's side, of Perrette Cœur.

The fate of Otto Castellani, or Chastelain, as he is sometimes called, was one justly deserved, and singularly appropriate. After having for a brief time enjoyed the place of Jacques Cœur, whom he had ruined, he was himself accused of malversation, was arrested, and made prisoner at Lyons in 1455, by order of the king, who was then in the town. Nothing more is related of him, but that in the end the king granted him a pardon; but he probably sunk into contempt and obscurity, as his name occurs no more in the history of the time.

Jacques Cœur had advanced all his factors to high appointments; and though two shewed themselves ungrateful to him, all the others were true to their benefactor in the hour of his adversity. Guillaume de Varic, a native of the town of Bourges, was made by him general of finance, at a period when there were only four persons who held appointments in this department. Varic was at the time his chief factor in this central part of the kingdom. He was also baillie and

governor of Touraine, a post of considerable dignity, in which he was confirmed by Louis XI. Varic was Seigneur of Azay le Feron, in Touraine, and built a magnificent house, called de l'Isle Savary.

Another of the great merchant's factors was Pierre Joubert, also a native of Bourges, whom he made changeur du trésor, the same as receiver-general, of all the domains of the king.

Jean de Village, the saviour of his master, after the death of the ill-rewarded friend of his king, ventured to address a letter to Charles VII., in the month of February, 1457, stating his share in the evasion of the prisoner of Beaucaire.

It is stated that the king was "touched with compassion towards Jean de Village, and acknowledged that *in all other respects* he was a man of a good life and conversation; and *also*, that he was very well instructed, and of great experience in the business of navigation." This latter fact, probably, influenced the monarch chiefly, when he accorded him *a pardon*, by his letters, dated the same month of the same year.

This devoted friend and faithful servant of his generous master was, like him, born at Bourges, where he was received at a very early age into the house of Jacques Cœur, and brought up by him. His high qualities, talents, and probity so much recommended him to his master, that he employed him in the most difficult parts of his

business; and his genius for commerce was displayed in all the transactions conducted under his auspices. Finding him so worthy and so efficient, Jacques Cœur constituted him master of his galleys, and drew their friendship and interests yet closer, by marrying him to his niece.

Like all those employed in the service of the great merchant, he not only possessed a large fortune, but rose to rank and dignity, and held the most honourable posts. He became, in the course of time, Seigneur of Lançon in Provence, Viguier of Marseilles, and captain-general of the marine, as well as counsellor and maître d'hôtel of René, King of Sicily. He was likewise chamberlain of the Duke of Calabria, son of Le bon Roi, and continued throughout his career the same prosperous course. In his case, at least, probity and gratitude met with a due reward.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

Mr. Johnes, of Hafod, thus speaks on the subject of this biography, in his edition of La Brocquière: *—

"Jacques Cœur was an extraordinary character, and a striking instance of the ingratitude of monarchs. Although of low origin, he raised himself by his abilities to high honours, and acquired by his activity immense riches. He was one of the most celebrated merchants that ever existed; and, had it not been for his superior management of the finances, the generals, able as they were, of Charles VII., would never have expelled the English from France.

* "Travels of Bertrandon de la Brocquière, counsellor and first esquire, carver to Philippe le Bon, Duke of Burgundy, to Palestine, and his return from Jerusalem overland to France, during the years 1432 and 1433. Hafod, 1807."

This famous traveller, who returned overland from Palestine, presented himself to the Duke of Burgundy in his Saracen dress, which he had been obliged to wear, and on the horse that had carried him during the whole of this astonishing journey.

"Should time be allowed me, I shall probably furnish a selection from curious papers, illustrative of his life, and of other events that took place in France during the reigns of Charles VI., Charles VII., and Louis XI."

In the "Bibliothèques Françoises" of La Croix du Maine and Du Verdier, the following mention is made of Jacques Cœur:—

"Jaques Cœur, Baron de St. Fargeau, native of Bourges, in Berry, treasurer and argentier of the King of France, Charles VII., 1453.—In this year sentence was passed against him on several charges, the truth of which is not known: he was condemned to pay the sum of four hundred thousand crowns, to have all his goods confiscated, and was declared incapable of holding estates, and banished the kingdom for ever.

"Many have thought that he had discovered the philosopher's stone, and that the pieces vulgarly called Jacques Cœurs were made and fabricated by his invention.

"To speak of his writings, this is what I have seen of his composition:—'Le Calcul ou Dénombrement de la Valeur et Revenu du Royaume de France.' This is to be met with in the book of Jean Bouchet de Poictiers, called 'Le Chevalier sans Reproche;' and also in the book of Jaques Signet, called 'La Division du Monde.' He is said to have written several other works on the

finances of the king's household and of the kingdom, but they are not printed.

"In vain was his memory re-established, and his sentence of banishment annulled; he had not courage to return and expose himself again to the envy and jealousy of his compatriots.

"He formed a new establishment at Cyprus, where he died."

M. Michelet's Opinion of Jacques Cœur and his Abode.

"Il faut visiter à Bourges la curieuse maison de ce personnage équivoque—maison pleine de mystères, comme fut sa vie. On voit, à bien la regarder, qu'elle montre et qu'elle cache; partout on y croit sentir deux choses opposées, la hardiesse et la défiance du parvenu, l'orgueil du commerce oriental, et en même temps la réserve de l'argentier du roi. Toutefois la hardiesse l'emporte: ce mystère affiché est comme un défi au passant.

"Cette maison, avancée un peu dans la rue, comme pour regarder et voir venir, se tient quasi toute close; à ses fausses fenêtres, deux valets en pierre ont l'air d'épier les gens. Dans la cour, de petits bas-reliefs offrent les humbles images du travail, la fileuse, la balayeuse, le vigneron, le colporteur; (1) mais par-dessus cette fausse humilité la statue équestre du banquier plane (2) impérialement. Dans ce triomphe à huis clos, le grand

homme d'argent ne dédaigne pas d'enseigner tout le secret de sa fortune; il nous l'explique en deux devises: l'une est l'héroique rébus, "*A vaillans* (cœurs) *riens impossible.*" Cette devise est de l'homme, de son audace, de son naïf orgueil. L'autre est la petite sagesse du marchand au moyen âge: "*Bouche close. Neutre. Entendre dire. Faire. Taire.*" Sage et discrète maxime, qu'il falloit suivre en la taisant. Dans la belle salle du haut, la vaillant Cœur est plus indiscret encore; il s'est fait sculpter pour son amusement quotidien, une joute burlesque, un tournoi à ânes, —moquerie durable de la chevalerie qui dut déplaire à bien des gens.

"Le beau portrait que Godefroid donne de Jacques Cœur d'après l'original, et qui doit ressembler, est une figure eminemment roturière (mais point du tout vulgaire), dure, fine et hardie. Elle sent un peu le trafiquant en pays Sarrasin, le marchand d'hommes. La France ne remplit que le milieu de cette avantureuse vie, (3) qui commence et finit en Orient: marchand en Syrie dès 1432, il meurt en Chypre Amiral du Saint Siége. Le Pape,—un pape Espagnol,—tout animé du feu des Croisades, Calixte Borgia, l'accueillit dans son malheur, et l'envoya combattre les Turcs.

"C'est ce que rappelle à Bourges la chapelle funéraire de Cœur. (4) Jacques y parait transfiguré dans les splendides vitraux sous le costume de Saint Jacques, patron des pélerins; dans ses

armes, trois coquilles de pélerinage,—triste pélerinage! les coquilles sont noires; mais entre sont postés fièrement trois cœurs rouges,—le triple cœur du héros marchand. Le registre de l'eglise ne lui donne qu'un titre: "Capitaine de l'Eglise contre les Infidèles." (5) Du roi, de l'argentier du roi, pas un mot,—rien qui rappelle ses services si mal reconnus; peutêtre, en son amour-propre de banquier, a-t-il voulu qu'on oubliât cette mauvaise affaire qui sauva la France, (6) cette faute d'avoir pris un trop puissant débiteur, (7) d'avoir prêté à qui pouvait le payer d'un gibet!

"Il y avait pourtant dans ce qu'il fit ici une chose qui valait bien qu'on la rappelât: c'est que cet homme intelligent (8) rétablit les monnaies, inventa en finance la chose inouïe, la justice, et crut que pour le roi, comme pour tout le monde, le moyen d'être riche, c'était de payer.

"Cela ne veut pas dire qu'il ait été fort scrupuleux sur les moyens de gagner pour lui-même. Sa double qualité de créancier du roi et d'argentier du roi,—ce rôle étrange d'un homme qui prêtait d'une main et se payait de l'autre,—devait l'exposer fort. Il parait assez probable qu'il avait durement pressuré le Languedoc, et qu'il faisait l'usure indifféremment avec le roi et avec l'ennemi du roi, je veux dire avec le dauphin. Il avait en ce métier pour concurrents naturels les Florentins, qui l'avaient toujours fait. Nous savons par le journal de Pitti, (9) tout à la fois ambassadeur,

banquier, et joueur gagé, ce que c'etaient que ces gens. Les rois leur reprenaient de temps en temps en gros, par confiscation, ce qu'ils avaient pris en détail. La colossale maison des Bardi et Peruggi avait fait naufrage au quatorzième siècle, après avoir prêté à Edouard III., de quoi nous faire la guerre, cent vingt millions. (10) Au quinzième, la grande maison, c'étaient les Médicis, banquiers du Saint Siége, qui risquaient moins, dans leur occulte commerce de la daterie, échangeant bulles et lettres de change, papier pour papier.

"L'ennemi capital de Jacques Cœur, (11) qui le ruina et prit sa place, Otto Castellani, trésorier de Toulouse, parait avoir été parent des Medicis. (12) Les Italiens et les seigneurs agirent de concert dans ce procès, et en firent *une affaire.* On ameuta le peuple en disant que l'argentier faisait sortir l'argent du royaume, qu'il vendait des armes aux Sarrasins, (13) qu'il leur avait rendu un esclave Chrétien, &c.

(14) "L'argent prêté au dauphin pour troubler le royaume fut peutêtre son véritable crime. Ce qui est sûr, c'est que Louis XI., à peine roi, le réhabilita fort honorablement."

Michelet's Notes.

" (1.) Je crois pouvoir appeler ainsi l'homme qui parait tenir un hoyau, et celui qui est en manteau.

" (2.) *Planait* serait plus exact.

" (3.) Né à Bourges, mais, je crois, originaire de Paris. Un Jean Cuer, monnoier à la monnoie de Paris, obtient rémission en 1374 pour avoir pris part à une batterie des gens de la maison du roi contre les bouchers.—*Archives*, Registre J. cvi., Nos. 77. 207.

" (4.) la Description de l'Eglise patriarcale, primatiale, et métropolitaine de Bourges, par Romelot, p. 182—190.

" (5.) 29 Juin, 1462, (?) obiit generosi animi Jacobus Cordis, miles, Ecclesiæ capitaneus generalis contra Infideles, qui sacristiam nostram extruxit et ornamentis decoravit, aliaque plurima ecclesiæ procuravit bona.—*Ibidem* 177.

" (6.) Il ne faut pas oublier dans quelle misère s'était trouvé Charles VII. La chronique raconte qu'un cordonnier, étant venu lui apporter des souliers, et lui en ayant déjà chaussé un, s'enquit du payement, et comprenant qu'il était fort incertain, déchaussa bravement le roi et emporta la marchandise. On en fit une chanson, dont voici les quatre premiers vers:—

> Quant le roy s'en vint en France,
> Il fist oindre ses houssiaulx;
> Et la royne lui demande,
> Où veut aller cest damoiseaulx?

La savante éditrice de Fenin et de Comines, à qui je dois cette note, l'a tirée du MS. 122 *du fonds Canyé, Bibl. Royale.*

" (7.) Il n'était pas le seul qui eût fait cette faute. Un bourgeois de Bourges, Pierre de Valenciennes, fournit à lui seul trois cent milliers de traits d'arbalètes, &c. Le roi lui donna la haute, moyenne, et basse justice à Saint Oulechart, près Bourges.—*Archives*, Registre J. clxxix. 10 bis ann. 1447.

" (8.) Le premier peutêtre qui ait senti le besoin de connaître les ressources du royaume, et qui ait fait l'essai, il est vrai, inexécutable alors, d'une statistique.

" (9.) Cité par Délécluse, Histoire de Florence, ii. 132.

" (10.) On ne peut estimer à moins 16 millions de ce temps-là. (?)

" (11.) En 1459 le roi accorde rémission à Maître Pierre Mignon, qui après avoir étudié ès arts et décret à Toulouse et Barcelonne, a gravé de faux sceaux et s'est occupé de magie. Il a fait à Octo Castellan, depuis argentier du roi, deux images de cire; ' *L'un pour mectre feu Jacques Cuer*, nostre argentier lors, en nostre male grâce, et lui faire perdre son office d'argentier; l'autre, pour faire que le dit Octo Castellan, Guillaume Gouffier et ses compagnons, fussent en notre bonne grâce et amour."—*Archives*, Registre J. cxix. 14 ann. 1459.

" (12.) Un Jaco de Médicis, de Florence, agé de 25 ans, (parent d'Octo Castellan, trésorier de Toulouse,) sortant de l'Hôtel de la Trésorerie, où il exerce fait de marchandise, rencontre Bertrand Bétune, ruffian, qui le frappe sans avoir eu auparavant nulle parole avec lui; de là un combat et une rémission accordés à Médicis.

" (13.) Une telle accusation devait faire une grande impression, au moment de la prise de Constantinople. La condamnation de J. C. est justment datée du jour de la prise de cette ville, 29 Mai, 1453.

" (14.) La guerre veut de l'argent: Jacques Cœur sut en trouver. D'où venait celui-ci? Quels furent sés commencements. On regrette de le savoir si peu. Seulement, dès 1432 nous le voyons commerçant à Beyrouth en Syrie; un peu plus tard, nous le trouvons à Bourges, argentier du roi. Le grand commerçant avait toujours un pied dans l'Orient, un pied en France. Ici

il faisait son fils Archevêque de Bourges; là-bas, il mariait ses nièces ou autres parents aux patrons de ses galères. D'une part il continuait le trafic en Egypte; de l'autre il speculait sur l'entretien des armées, sur la conquête de la Normandie!"

Michelet calls him and Bureau "les habiles et modestes conseillers du roi."

The same author says of Bureau:—"Bureau prit pour armes trois burettes ou fioles; mais le peuple préférant l'autre etymologie, tout aussi roturière, tira *bureau* de *bure*, et en fit le proverbe: '*Bureau vaut escarlate.*'

"Ce Bureau était un homme de robe, un maître des comptes. Il laissa là la plume, montrant par cette remarquable transformation qu'un bon esprit peut s'appliquer à tout. Henri IV. reforma les finances par un homme de guerre: Charles VII. fit la guerre par un homme de finance. Bureau fit le premier un usage habile et savant de l'artillerie."

THE END.

LONDON:
Printed by S. & J. BENTLEY, WILSON, and FLEY,
Bangor House, Shoe Lane.

00021276

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 26 March, 2016